

JUNE 2004

ISSUE 77

Head Start *Bulletin*

ENHANCING HEAD START COMMUNICATION
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Pull-out in English & Spanish:

Tips for Creating a Family Story Book
Consejos para Crear un Libro
de Historias Familiares

Father Involvement—

Building Strong Programs
for Strong Families



The *Head Start Bulletin* is published by the Head Start Bureau,
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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Wade F. Horn, Assistant Secretary

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ADMINISTRATION ON CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

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HEAD START BUREAU

Windy M. Hill, Associate Commissioner

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Craig Turner, Director, Division of Program Management

JoAn Knight Herren, Chief, T/TA Branch

Frankie Hoover Gibson, Guest Editor

Jeff Fredericks, Managing Editor

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Judy David, Senior Editor

Trish Warner, Editor

Shannon Lewis, Writer

Tracie Dickson, Program Specialist

Catherine Hardman, Resource Librarian

Lindsay Stevens, Editorial Assistant

FTK Media, Production

Head Start Bulletin

Head Start Father Involvement

Issue No. 77

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page 37: The Compu-Dad project trained fathers in marketable skills.



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HEAD START'S FATHERHOOD FOCUS

We need to restore a culture that uplifts men in their role as fathers.

by Dr. Wade F. Horn

Wade F. Horn, Ph.D., was named the Assistant Secretary for Children and Families in the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, on July 30, 2001. Prior to this appointment, Dr. Horn was President of the National Fatherhood Initiative, whose mission is to improve the well-being of children by increasing the number of children growing up with involved, committed, and responsible fathers in their lives. From 1989-1993, Dr. Horn was the Commissioner for Children, Youth and Families and Chief of the Children's Bureau in the Administration on Children, Youth and Families. He also served as a Presidential appointee to the National Commission on

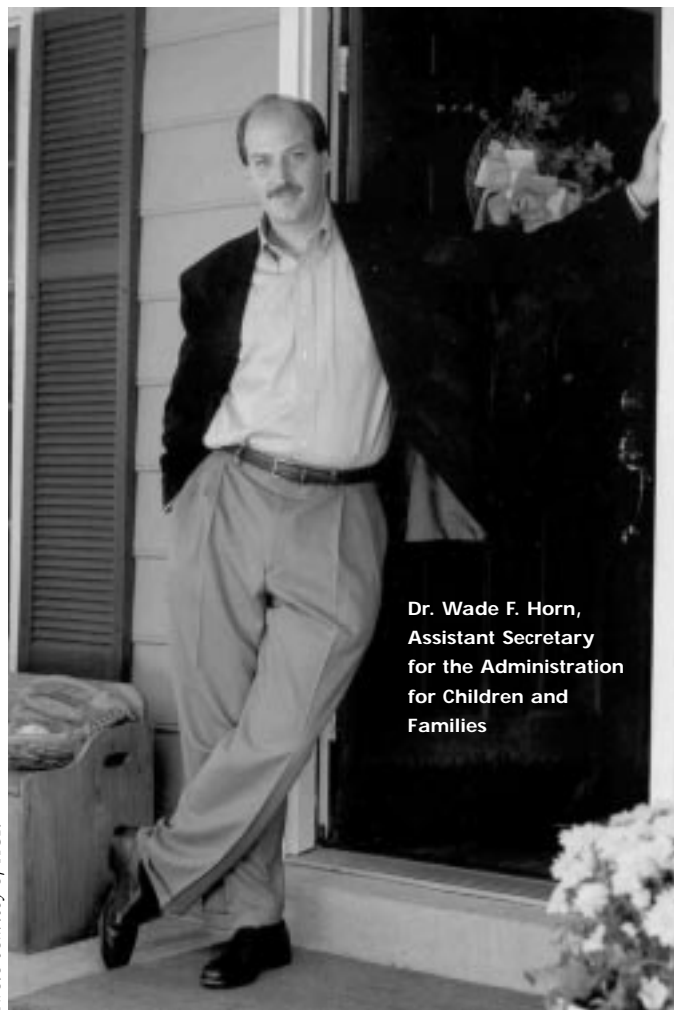
Children from 1990-1993 and was a member of the National Commission on Childhood Disability from 1994-1995 and the U.S. Advisory Board on Welfare Indicators from 1996-1997. Prior to these appointments, Dr. Horn was the Director of Outpatient Psychological Services at the Children's Hospital National Medical Center in Washington, D.C., and an Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at George Washington University. From 1993-2001, Dr. Horn was also an adjunct faculty member at Georgetown University's Public Policy Institute and an affiliate scholar with the Hudson Institute. In this article, Dr. Horn responds to questions about father involvement in Head Start.

What is it about fathers and fathering that makes dads unique and irreplaceable?

Children do best in life when they grow up with the active, positive involvement of both a mother and father. Whatever the measure—physical and emotional health, educational achievement, behavior, substance abuse, crime or delinquency—children are more likely to lead healthy, productive lives when both their mother and father are actively involved in their lives in positive ways. This is because moms and dads tend to parent differently, at least in some important ways, and their complementary parenting skills and attitudes combine to give children the best environment in which to grow up healthy and successful.

Why is incorporating fatherhood programming into Head Start so important? How will it improve child outcomes?

Because of the importance of fathers to the healthy development of their children, our goal should be to strengthen the role of responsible and loving fathers in the lives of their children. Under the direction of President George W. Bush, Head Start is committed to taking a leadership role in fostering the positive involvement of fathers with their children. Studies from all sides of the philosophical spectrum have shown that children in similar situations do better on a host of outcomes, including educational achievement and physical and emotional health, when raised with responsible, loving, involved, and committed fathers in their lives.



**Dr. Wade F. Horn,
Assistant Secretary
for the Administration
for Children and
Families**

Photo courtesy of ACE.

What would a father-friendly Head Start program look like?

A father-friendly Head Start program will seek out fathers wherever they are in the community—whether at the barber shop, in the workplace, or on the playground. Also, the program will schedule fatherhood activities at times that work for fathers and will do everything to welcome fathers—from hiring staff that can communicate well with fathers to including posters on the wall that imply, “This is a place where a man can be comfortable spending time.” Program staff will collect information to help them understand the fathers in their community—how many are married, how many are living with their children, how many are employed, and their cultural backgrounds.

These are just a few thoughts. More can be learned from the *Building Blocks for Father Involvement* and from the videos that complement the *Building Blocks* series.

How would you suggest a Head Start program start to incorporate a fatherhood focus into their program? In other words, what are the first steps?

I would tell them a few things. First, look at your program. Imagine you are a father visiting for the first time. Does it look and feel welcoming? Help your staff explore any concerns or misconceptions about fathers that may get in the way of an effective fatherhood program. Learn about the fathers of the children in your program and your community. What do they need and how will you meet them where they are? Maybe that is the biggest piece of initial advice I can give—be willing to meet fathers where they are in terms of their issues and needs.

Some Head Start programs have already taken to heart the importance of father involvement. How can they ensure that they continue to “stretch” themselves and to operate on the cutting-edge of fatherhood programming?

We have just added fatherhood as an area of focus in our new Technical Assistance (TA) program. Be sure to explore with your TA Parent Involvement Specialist how to continually expand and improve your fatherhood program. For example, fatherhood

should be a component of your TA budget, whether by sending staff to training seminars or bringing in expert consultants. Also, be sure to provide training about fatherhood to all staff, not just your parent involvement or male outreach coordinator. Some of the most interesting research and demonstration work going on in the fatherhood movement involves low-income fathers. Your regional TA specialist can help you incorporate the findings of this research into your own work.

How will we know if Head Start father involvement efforts are successful?

We should be concerned with program outcomes such as the number of Head Starts with fatherhood programs and fatherhood outreach staff and the percentage of Head Start programs with fatherhood as part of their TA budget.

There are other outcomes we should look at, including the number of fathers involved in the Head Start program, whether the types of activities offered are relevant and helpful to fathers, and the perceptions fathers have of the Head Start program.

Most important, of course, are child outcomes: physical and emotional health, school readiness, and overall child well-being.

Does this mean we should not focus our outreach on mothers?

Of course not. Head Start will continue to work closely with mothers of children enrolled in the program. But fathers also play a major role in the lives of children and families. Consequently, we need to restore a culture that uplifts men in their role as fathers—not just as economic providers, but as nurturers, disciplinarians, teachers, and role models. The father-friendly Head Start program was created to do just that. Combined with our existing efforts, we can promote the great roles of both parents—mothers and fathers—and, in so doing, improve the lives of children and families. ■

Dr. Wade F. Horn is the Assistant Secretary for the Administration for Children and Families.

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HEAD START'S COMMITMENT TO FATHERS

Head Start programs have a long and successful history of male involvement that benefits children and families. **by Windy M. Hill** showcasing and building on best practices; and presenting current information and training.

Photo courtesy of ACE.



Windy M. Hill,
Associate Commissioner
of the Head Start Bureau

SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 1965, Head Start programs have benefited from the outstanding contributions of many men, especially fathers. They have been program leaders and active participants in promoting their children's development. In Head Start's vision of parent involvement, as mandated in

the *Head Start Program Performance Standards*, fathers and mothers partner with the program to reach family goals. We celebrate this long history of male involvement and welcome the continuing participation of fathers and other men in the Head Start community.

Research shows that fathers make unique and important contributions to their children's development and that children of involved fathers are more likely to succeed in school. Recent successful implementation of fatherhood involvement demonstration projects in 21 Early Head Start programs has given us ideas about effective practices. To further promote the involvement of fathers in their children's lives, which is also a priority of President George W. Bush, the Head Start Bureau is highlighting its fatherhood focus.

An important aspect of this effort is The Father Factor: National Head Start Institute on Father Involvement, June 14-18, 2004 in Dallas, Texas. For the first time, the Head Start Bureau is bringing together leaders of every Head Start and Early Head Start program in the nation to focus on father involvement. The goals of the Institute include: ensuring that programs understand the beneficial impact of father involvement; facilitating more effective involvement of fathers in the lives of their children;

This *Head Start Bulletin* on Father Involvement is an important resource for father involvement efforts. The Table of Contents complements *The Building Blocks for Father Involvement*, a series of booklets that are available to Head Start programs and that provide the structure for the Fatherhood Institute. The sections in the *Bulletin* are:

Appreciating How Fathers Give Children a Head Start: Why fathers matter and current research findings.

First Thoughts on Getting Fathers Involved in Head Start: The important questions and obstacles a Head Start program must address, such as the role of women in fatherhood programs, and the use of a father-friendly environmental assessment.

Building a Foundation to Work with Fathers: Lessons learned from the fatherhood demonstration projects in Early Head Start and information on creating a family story book.

Planning for Success: Six fatherhood programs from around the country that serve diverse populations.

Bringing a Fatherhood Program to Life: Ways programs can support family literacy, including dads' reading with their children, and information on several U. S. government efforts to promote children's and men's health.

We hope that the information in this *Head Start Bulletin* assists you in fulfilling our shared mission to support young children and their families. We look forward to seeing you in Dallas and hearing about the progress and accomplishments of your father involvement efforts in the years to come. ■

Windy M. Hill was named Associate Commissioner of the Head Start Bureau on January 7, 2002.

THE BUILDING BLOCKS FOR SUCCESSFUL FATHER INVOLVEMENT IN HEAD START

The *Building Blocks* are a valuable resource for all Head Starts whether their fatherhood program is new or well-established. **by Glenn Stanton**

It was nearly 30 years ago that leading child psychologist Michael E. Lamb (1975) reminded us that fathers are the “forgotten contributors to child development.” Since then, much work has been done to explore the ways fathers make unique contributions to the healthy development of their children. Researchers know that boys and girls of all races and all socioeconomic groups who grow up with an involved father have stronger cognitive and motor skills, enjoy elevated levels of physical and mental health, and become better and more confident problem-solvers. They demonstrate more curiosity and empathy and show greater moral sensitivity and self-control.

Fathers can help a Head Start program be more effective at promoting children’s development and learning. And at the same time, a Head Start program can help fathers be more effective in their children’s lives. To help a program increase effective father involvement, the Head Start Bureau has developed a very important resource, *The Building Blocks for Father Involvement*. This series of five booklets will assist any Head Start program in developing and sustaining a father involvement program. *The Building Blocks* can help programs understand why fathers are essential for healthy child development and then begin to grow and sustain their fatherhood involvement programs and evaluate their efforts. *The Building Blocks* are useful for Head Starts that are at the initial stages of building a fatherhood program as well as for those whose fatherhood programs are well-established.

The *Building Blocks for Father Involvement* consists of

Building Block 1—Appreciating How Fathers Give Children a Head Start

The first booklet in the series surveys the sociological, psychological, and medical research on how father involvement uniquely benefits child well-being. It is important that Head Start staff and parents understand why fathers are essential. This knowledge will provide the drive and conviction needed

to press on in this important work. Included in *Building Block 1* is a reading list on the topic of why fathers matter.

Building Block 2—First Thoughts on Getting Fathers Involved in Head Start

Building Block 2 explores important questions and obstacles a Head Start program must address and overcome as well as steps in planning an effective fatherhood project. It offers guidance in understanding Head Start fathers and how a successful program can involve them. Attention is given to breaking down unintentional, but very real, programmatic barriers that might keep fathers from becoming involved.

The *Building Blocks* will help Head Start programs develop and sustain father involvement.



Photo by G. Slocum. Courtesy of R. Nkurunziza.

Building Block 3 – Building a Foundation to Work with Fathers

The first two *Building Blocks* are prep work to get ready for *Building Block 3*: establishing a fatherhood program. The first step is exploring the six stages of becoming a father-friendly program. The second step is understanding the qualities of a successful fatherhood program and how to incorporate them into a new system. Included in *Building Block 3* is a tool for assessing the father-friendliness of a program and an Action Plan for becoming more father-friendly. This booklet also offers ideas for securing the key resources to make a father involvement program happen: money, staff, and community partners.

THE BUILDING BLOCKS

Building Block 4—Planning for Success

After establishing the foundation of successful father involvement work, programs begin to erect the structure for this work. Studies of program effectiveness show that when fatherhood programs fail, it is because they are not planned properly. This problem is avoided by smart planning.

Building Block 4 describes the organizational structure of a successful fatherhood program and includes a Program Planning Worksheet. The Worksheet serves as the guiding document and outline for a program's budding fatherhood project. The booklet also poses critical questions which Head Start programs must address for smart planning:

- Who are the fathers in your program?
- What are their needs?
- Why are these fathers not involved in the lives of their children?
- What activities can improve father involvement?

Building Block 5—Bringing a Fatherhood Plan to Life

All the background learning, planning, and organizational strategizing are important work and have been done in *Building*

child activities. A bibliography of books that fathers can share with their children is provided.

Other important resources that contribute to increased fatherhood involvement in Head Start programs are discussed: healthy mother/father relationships, full staff support, staff sensitivity to cultural issues, and staff openness to working with fathers. *Building Block 5* also provides information about conducting an ongoing evaluation of the fatherhood project so that constant program improvement is made easier.



Photo by A. Oliveira. ABCD HS.

Building Blocks 1-5 will help any Head Start program move from curiosity about father involvement work to having a successful and growing fatherhood project. The series will also help well-established fatherhood programs improve their efforts. A child who has an involved mother and father is a child who has a substantial head start in life. And *The Building Blocks for Father Involvement* will help your program provide this head start for more children in your community. ■

REFERENCES

Lamb, M. E. 1975. Fathers: The forgotten contributors to child development. *Human Development* 18: 245-266.

Glenn T. Stanton is Director of Social Research and Cultural Affairs, Focus on the Family, Colorado Springs, CO. T: 719-548-5980; E: stantogt@fotf.org

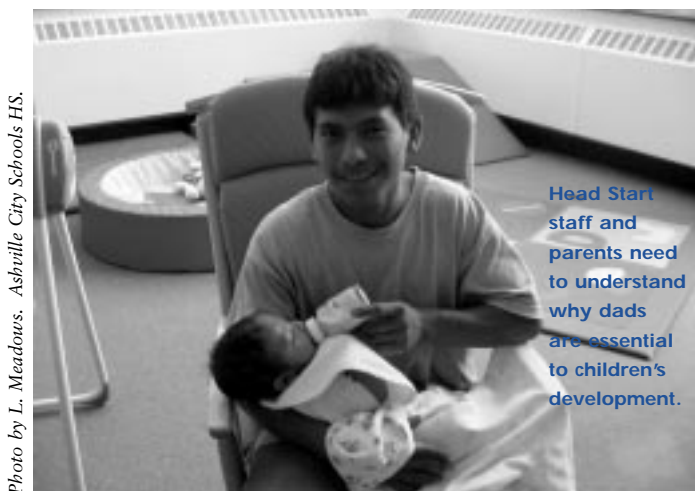


Photo by L. Meadows. Asheville City Schools HS.

Blocks 1-4. The final booklet, *Building Block 5*, starts the real fun—implementing all the ideas and plans that have been developed. Included are creative ideas for building child-awareness in fathers and helping men connect with their children in meaningful ways. There is also a list of age-appropriate, everyday father-

BY DR. WADE F. HORN

FATHERING INFANTS

THE FOLLOWING MATERIAL HAS BEEN EXCERPTED from Dr. Wade Horn's article "Fathering Infants" (2000). At that time, Dr. Horn served as President of The National Fatherhood Initiative, located in Gaithersburg, Maryland. Dr. Horn currently serves as the Assistant Secretary, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The review of the literature on fathers and infants clearly indicates that: 1) fathers can—and frequently do—become as attached to their infants as mothers do; 2) fathers are neither uninterested nor inept in interaction with their newborns; 3) fathers and mothers differ in the ways they tend to parent infants, and, as a result, infants tend to respond differentially to fathers and mothers; 4) the quality of the marital relationship affects the quality of the mother-child interactions, the quality of father-child interactions, and the quality of the child's development; and 5) active father involvement with his infant is predictive of better development outcomes for the child.

Still, many questions remain unanswered. First, too few studies have examined the broader social-cultural contexts within which fathers fulfill or fail to fulfill their role as social fathers. As a result, we have an inadequate understanding of the factors within the families, communities, workplaces, social institutions, and the broader culture that support or undermine fathering for different groups of fathers in different circumstances.

Second, because most studies of fathers and their infants have been conducted with white, middle-class families,



When fathers are actively involved with their infants, better developmental outcomes are predicted for the child.

we have only a limited understanding of differences that may exist between fathers from different ethnic groups. For example, do middle-class African-American and Hispanic fathers interact similarly with their infants as white, middle-class fathers? If there are differences, are these differences more a matter of ethnicity or social class? This kind of information would seem to be particularly helpful when designing outreach, skills building, and support programs targeted to fathers of different ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. More work also needs to be done to identify sub-groups of fathers, rather than merely studying individual fathering behaviors, and correlating father sub-groups with relevant socio-cultural factors and developmental outcomes for children.

Third, although it is clear that increasingly, numbers of fathers are

abandoning their role as social fathers, it is unclear why this is happening. Some posit that it is the loss of a clear fatherhood ideal (Blankenhorn 1996). Others stress economic factors (Mincy & Pouncy 1996). Still others emphasize the retreat from marriage as a cultural ideal (Popenoe 1997). Exactly which of these factors, or combination of factors, is operative for which fathers and under what circumstances is unknown.

Finally, we are only beginning to evaluate the effectiveness of programs and initiatives designed to increase the positive involvement of fathers with their infants. Little is known about what types of approaches are most effective with which groups of fathers and under what



Fathers can—and frequently do—become as attached to their infants as mothers do.

circumstances. Hence, much of the activity in this area is being driven more by supposition than empirical data. There is a pressing need to bring these activities under increasing scientific scrutiny so that we have a better knowledge base

Continued on 60

DID YOU KNOW THIS ABOUT FATHERS?

Children with involved, loving fathers do better in school, have healthy self-esteem, exhibit empathy and pro-social behavior, and avoid high-risk behaviors such as drug use, truancy, and criminal activity compared to children who have uninvolved fathers.

Wade F. Horn and Tom Sylvester. 2002. *Father Facts*, Gaithersburg, MD: National Fatherhood Initiative.

Over 100 studies on parent-child relationships reported that a loving and nurturing father was as important for a child's happiness, well-being, and social and academic success as having a loving and nurturing mother.

Ronald P. Rohner and Robert A. Veneziano. 2001. The importance of father love: History and contemporary evidence. *Review of General Psychology* 54: 382-405.

Premature infants whose fathers spent more time playing with them had better cognitive outcomes at age three.

Michael Yogman et al. 1995. Father involvement and cognitive behavioral outcomes in premature infants. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychology* 34: 58-66.

Fathers who set appropriate limits and allowed healthy independence tended to rear sons with high academic achievement.

S.S. Feldman, and K.R. Wentzel, 1990. Relations among family inter-

action patterns, classroom self-restraint and academic achievement in preadolescent boys, *Journal of Educational Psychology* 82: 813-819.

In a 26 year-long study, the number one



Photo courtesy of B. Patel.

Research shows that an involved father helps a child develop empathy.

factor in developing empathy was father involvement. Fathers who spent regular time alone with their children raised children who became compassionate adults.

Richard Koestner et al. 1990. The family origins of empathetic concern: A twenty-six year longitudinal study, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 58: 709-717.

Low-income, unmarried African American mothers stated that, after themselves, fathers were the most frequent providers of care to young children. A majority of those mothers (53%) indicated that fathers provided solo care to toddlers at least one or two days per week.

S. Hans et al. 1995. *Caregiving in the inner city: A final report to the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago.

A total of 42% of fathers in blue-collar and service occupations, compared to 18% of fathers in managerial and professional jobs, look after their children while their wives work.

Lynne M. Casper 1997. My daddy takes care of me! Fathers as care providers. P70-59. *Current Population Reports*: 1-9.

Higher levels of father involvement in children's typical routines and activities are associated with fewer behavior problems, higher levels of sociability and a high level of performance among children and adolescents, according to *Child Trends*.

Vivian Gadsen and Aisha Ray. 2002. Engaging Fathers: Issues and considerations for early childhood fathers. *Young Children* 57:32-42.

Fathers are more than just "second adults" in the home. Involved fathers—especially biological fathers—bring positive benefits to their children that no other person is as likely to bring. They have a parenting style different from that of mother and that difference is important in healthy child development.

David Popenoe, 1996. *Life Without Father*. New York: The Free Press 163. ■

Compiled by *Bulletin* staff from *Father Facts* by Wade F. Horn and Tom Sylvester. 4th edition (2002). Gaithersburg, MD: National Fatherhood Initiative.

BY ISAAC PEÑA

A SINGLE FATHER'S STORY

I AM OFTEN PRAISED FOR BEING INVOLVED IN THE LIVES OF MY CHILDREN. Why? Because I am a father of two young boys and a single parent. Since moving to Washington, D.C. and working as a Head Start Fellow, I have amazed even more people when I tell them that my sons live with me. I find their reaction puzzling. I deserve no thanks. I am only making good on my responsibility. It seems to come as a shock to many people that a father, going it alone, could be capable of taking care of two little children. Single moms do it all the time, but a single dad taking primary familial responsibility seems to catch people off-guard.

Yet, I wake up everyday and question why anyone would not want be involved in the daily lives of their extraordinary children! After that brief moment, I start my daily routine as a parent. I awaken Adam (4 years) and Noah (2 years) and get them ready, which on a good day takes less than an hour of convincing. We take two Metro trains and walk several blocks during rush hour traffic to daycare. Then I get back on the Metro to go to work at the Head Start Bureau. After work, I pick up my boys from daycare, which is always the best part of my day. I am greeted by the words, "Papa's here" and a couple of hugs. After fielding their questions, reviewing their day with the staff, admiring their drawings and other work, and talking about "fun stuff" with them, we head back to the Metro and go home. I often find myself carrying both of them during rush hour so they don't get trampled during the madness.

When we arrive home, we play for a little while. We do not have a TV in our apartment, so we read books or entertain ourselves by having "band" practice. I am still surprised that we have not been visited by the police for disturbing the

peace! At first, I didn't think we could survive without a TV, but the boys enjoy going to museums, monuments, and parks more than watching TV.

I get them involved in the preparations for dinner, which makes them more likely to help clean up at the end. After supper, it's time for their bath. As I dry them both off, I unfortunately have to tell them it is nearly bedtime. I usually get the response, "No, I am not tired yet." To parents, this response is not a surprise; kids never seem to get tired!

My children's mother encouraged

me to become involved in EHS. I ended up being hired as a parent educator. Out of 17 employees, I was the only male. It came as no surprise when I was asked to work on the EHS fatherhood demonstration project as well as work with the local Head Start program to incorporate more male involvement in their faith-based work.

The program had great success using the *21st Century Exploring Parenting* (EP21) curriculum. Four of us, from EHS, Head Start, and churches, worked together to develop a 10-week EP21 course. We combined a focus on fatherhood with a faith-based approach. I served as a facilitator with a female colleague; we worked with 10-15 parents per session. The initial sessions included both parents, and there were follow-up sessions for fathers. All participants were very enthusiastic, and by the



Photo courtesy of I. Peña.

The boys enjoy going to museums, monuments, and parks more than watching TV.

A SINGLE FATHER'S STORY

fourth week, even reserved parents were proud to share their Family Story Books with photos and mementos of happy family occasions.

The EHS program had enrolled a few single fathers, but our fatherhood meetings had a low turnout. At the time I was working as a parent educator and fatherhood coordinator, I was also a translator for the county government. I met many officials, including the Director of Probation. I shared an idea with him and wondered if the EHS program could reach out to fathers on probation. We ended up partnering with the community corrections office and were successful in reaching fathers on probation who had not been involved in their children's lives.

Through personal contact and flyers, we invited them to meetings and workshops. Here, they were encouraged to reflect upon their own childhood and their own fathers. As many realized the effects of their absent fathers on their own lives, they became eager to get involved in their children's lives and break that cycle.

As a parent educator, I learned a lot about fathers during home visits.

Typically, the males thought that the visits pertained more to the females. They would listen, but not get involved. One visit stands out – the father was there, but not actively participating. We shared with him that his daughter's first relationship with a male was with *him*, and therefore, could serve as a model for her

future relationships. That comment was an eye-opener. He realized how important it really is to be involved in his child's life and that he could make a big difference to her. Then he became more

We partnered with the community corrections office and were successful reaching fathers on probation who had not been involved in their children's lives.

conversational, engaged, and we developed a relationship.

I ask, "What can we do to involve fathers and significant males in the lives of Head Start children?" At the local level, we must aggressively pursue males for Policy Councils. We also must recruit more male staff to work in programs. Some fathers will be more responsive and involved if there is a male leading or participating in the program. We have to attract male students to attend colleges and universities that have strong education programs.

At the state and Federal levels, we must utilize resources that have been identified by the current administration. The father involvement, health marriage, and faith-based priorities can be

excellent additions to any Head Start program if put into place and utilized properly. Head Start also has a variety of excellent training materials; programs must take the initiative and ask for more training on fatherhood as well as related topics such as parent education and parent mentoring. At the local, state, and Federal levels, we must encourage parents to become politically active—not necessarily to pick a party or a specific candidate, but to tell their elected representatives how Head Start has changed their lives and the lives of their children. Head Start encourages empowerment and autonomy ; making the voices of Head Start parents heard is part of this.

We all know that being a parent is not easy. As a single father of two boys, I can attest to that. But being an involved parent or caregiver, such as a grandparent, is so important to our children's well-being, now and in the future. The fatherhood focus puts Head Start in a unique position to reach out to parents and other caring adults, get them involved in children's lives, and help them realize that the best parent is an involved parent. ■

*Isaac Peña is a Head Start Fellow, 2003-2004. He has been a parent educator for the Early Head Start program in Hays, Kansas and a facilitator for Head Start's 21st Century Exploring Parenting Program. T: 202-205-8751
E: Ipena@acf.hhs.gov.*

BY W. DOUGLAS TYNAN

FATHERS AND DISCIPLINE

WHEN WE HEAR THE TERMS “DISCIPLINE” AND “FATHER,” there appears to be a natural connection, but often with negative overtones. The idea of a father as one who punishes or is an authoritarian figure runs deep in our culture. Yet, fathers have much more to offer than only helping their children learn self-control and social rules, and their role involves much more than punishment.

Discipline is one of those familiar words that carry different meanings. To many people, discipline simply implies the setting of firm rules and limits and administering punishments for breaking those rules. But, in fact, the meaning is more complex. The word discipline is based on the Latin word “discipulus,” which means “a pupil,” or more accurately, “one who is learning.” Thus, the ancient origins of discipline are based on the notion of a reciprocal process of teaching and learning.

This notion is included in the modern definition of discipline. According to the *American Heritage Dictionary* (2000), the verb “to discipline” is defined as:

1. to train by instruction and practice, especially to teach self-control to.
2. to teach to obey rules or accept authority. See Synonyms at teach.
3. to punish in order to gain control of, enforce obedience. See Synonyms at punish.

When *discipline* refers to training and teaching specific behaviors of self-control and moral development, this becomes a tall order for all parents, yet one that has historically been embraced by fathers. Indeed, prior to the 1900s in western culture, it was assumed that fathers more than mothers were responsible for the development of their chil-



Photo by Eyewire.

How can today's fathers provide discipline in the sense of teaching and training their children?

dren's moral behavior and self control. Men were expected to take on the critical teaching role.

How can today's fathers provide discipline, in the sense of teaching and training their children? When does discipline start, and what form does it take?

Why Discipline is Important

The association between child-rearing practices and children's development of self-control has been well documented in research. Studies indicate that the quality of parental care is critical in the first year of life. Parents who are responsive, stimulating, and encouraging with their

babies are laying the foundation for the development of self-control. During this first year, babies learn whether or not their signals, such as cries when hungry, or cold, are understood, and if their needs are met. A successful interaction involves a parent reacting to a baby's message and behaving responsively and leads to more successful social interactions (Parke & Sawin 1976). In the second year, when children begin walking and exploring on their own, it is important for parents to set limits for the child's safety and provide guidelines for acceptable behavior. Parents begin to think more and more about how and when to discipline their toddlers who are increasingly asserting their independence and autonomy which are necessary, normal aspects of early development.

The temperament of each young child affects each parent's approach to discipline. Research shows that fussy, active, or difficult toddlers often drive their parents to be more restrictive and more punitive (Patterson 1980). A cycle of negative interactions is set in motion; misbehavior is followed by punishment; punishment is followed by increasing, accelerating patterns of misbehavior. The father's role in these family interactions involves both the support of the mother and direct interactions with the child. Both research studies and parents themselves report that the hard-to-manage children are more compliant and agreeable with their fathers than with their mothers. Also, when the father is

FATHERS AND DISCIPLINE

VALUING DISCIPLINE

The following points are taken from the *21st Century Exploring Parenting Program*, a Head Start publication. In Session 7 of the program, values are defined as standards of right and wrong that guide behavior. Though most parents do not realize it, their values determine how and why they discipline their children. It is therefore important for parents to evaluate their own values and to understand that every time they discipline their children, they are teaching about values.

Discipline is better understood as guidance and teaching, not controlling and punishing. Over time, children will learn how to control themselves, but until they can, adults need to help them by setting appropriate limits and modeling correct behavior. Discipline is an all day – every day teaching and learning process. These points will help parents as they continue to guide their young children.

- Values are principles and standards that guide our behavior.
- The values that individual family members hold dear vary considerably.
- Parents want their children to accept their values.
- The words “discipline and “disciple” come from the Latin word “discipulus” which means pupil or student – one who learns.
- Babies need to be loved, nurtured, and accepted as they are. Nothing they do can be called misbehavior.
- Toddlers need adults to make rules that keep them and others safe and protect the family's belongings. They need help in keeping these rules and controlling their behavior.
- Preschoolers still need help in regulating their behavior. They are ready for more explanations about why they must do some things and cannot do others.
- The more time you spend in positive interaction with your children, the more likely it is that they will accept your values and want to please you.
- The combination of positive time together and discipline usually works better than discipline alone.

present in the room or nearby, children are much more compliant with their mothers (Patterson 1980; Lytton 1980). Research also indicates that when problems spiral out of control, sometimes

fathers step in with harsh, direct punishment to get the situation back under control, which, unfortunately, can precipitate a cycle of punishment and misbehavior (DeKlyen 1998). Thus, poorly

modulated behavior in a toddler or preschool child can overwhelm the mother or father, as well as split the parents into disagreement as they argue on how to manage the child. When parents disagree on behavior management, there is little improvement in the child.

The first positive strategy is to help the parents agree on how to handle some specific parenting issues. For example, they might come up with a plan to follow at bedtime, including specific ways to talk with the child. In this way, consistency is built up in the home environment. Calm, consistent behavior by adults is the model for teaching self-control in the child. The concept of *discipline* as teaching a set of behaviors to the child—not just punishment—becomes a reality only when there is consistency. A consistent plan on handling bedtime tantrums carried out by the mother and father can go a long way toward establishing a general pattern of discipline and the development of self-control.

Research emphasizes the important role of fathers in helping children to learn the standards of behavior for their group and to develop the capacity of self-regulation (Lamb 1987). When fathers are absent, curtail, or ignore their child-rearing responsibilities, there are implications throughout the family system. Mothers are likely to feel unsupported, abandoned, angry, and resentful. The resulting tension exacerbates the child's challenging behaviors. Lack of parental involvement by the father leaves the mother as

the sole unsupported teacher of social skills and deprives the child of another role model. When fathers do not participate in child rearing, the results can be heightened intensity and duration of mother–child conflict and problems in discipline (Campbell 2002).

Playing with Children

The role of fathers for all children, not just those with challenging behaviors, is unique and important. As Lamb (1998) has indicated, the father is typically the one who engages in physical rough and tumble play with children. In the course of active play, children may test limits. Whether the activity involves tickling, wrestling or splashing in the pool, paying attention and stopping when needed are important lessons to be learned. Thus, discipline and learning self-control can start with play.

Fathers tend to be more active in their play, helping their children to be first in a race, catch the ball the most times, throw the farthest, jump the farthest, and leap into the water. While mothers are sometimes exasperated at fathers who get their sons and daughters excited, energized, and otherwise “all worked up,” play has purpose. It tests limits and boundaries generally pushed less often by mothers. The children have to learn how to play without hurting someone else or getting hurt themselves, and how to direct their energy.

Constructive play is something both fathers and mothers can enjoy. Whether

building with blocks to construct a road or a family’s house, or “cooking” with play food and utensils, children enjoy the process of creating and constructing, then starting all over again. One of the most valuable interactions a father can have is getting down on the floor each

The concept of discipline as teaching a set of behaviors to the child—not just punishment—becomes a reality only when there is consistency.

day for 15 minutes and playing with his child—playing, commenting, and giving undivided attention.

Talking to Children

How parents speak greatly influences how often children comply with directions. While individuals certainly differ, the research is fairly consistent that mothers tend to explain more to their children, while fathers tend to use fewer words in all interactions. Fathers are often more tactile and physical, while mothers are typically more verbal and didactic (Parke 1996). Let’s look at the task of giving a child the command to get ready to go to bed. Many mothers assume that if the child really under-

stands why it is time for bed, they will be more likely to go to bed. For example, a mother might say, “Go to bed now because you have a busy day tomorrow,” and follow it with a long explanation about how the body needs to rest, the child looks tired, and so on. However, the child, may lose track of the direction “go to bed” in the midst of all the other words.

On the other hand, some parents, more often fathers, tend to be a bit more direct, but often without the explanation. A very direct, “Go to bed now” appears harsh and may elicit some negative emotions from the child. An effective middle ground would be a brief explanation, followed by a clear command: “It’s past your bedtime, you’ve had a busy day and have a lot to do tomorrow. It’s time to go to bed.” Repeating the direction (go to bed) at the end of the verbal exchange helps bring it to the child’s attention.

Consequences: Positive and Negative

Consistently positive or negative responses to a child’s behavior will change how often the child will respond the same way. Most child behavior is shaped by hundreds of daily back-and-forth interactions with the world around them, not by any single event or response. In short, parents need to do what they say, and to be consistent. If parents promise to do things and do them each time they promise, their children will trust and

Research shows that mothers tend to explain more to their children, while fathers tend to use fewer words in all their interactions.

expect them to follow through. If a parent promises to play after dinner, and does, the child may eat more neatly and quickly. If a parent promises to take away a privilege because the child has broken a rule, the parent needs to do it so the child follows the rule next time. Promises are critically important when fathers do not live with their children and visits are arranged. Promised visits, phone calls and activities must occur, or the child learns not to trust the father, or other adults for that matter.

When positive and negative consequences are used to shape behavior, large, lavish one-time rewards of an expensive toy or video game, or harsh intense punishments such as being spanked severely or sent to one's room for hours, are not as effective as the little rewards of adult attention and time, or consistent brief mild punishments. For most children between the ages of two and six, a brief "Time Out" of sitting away quietly, not isolated, but not being paid attention is the most effective mild punishment.

"Time Out" allows both parent and child to cool down, and the withdrawal of adult attention functions to reduce the problem behavior in the future. Other brief logical consequences include a short loss of privilege. For example if two children fight over a toy or what to watch on TV, and are unable to problem-solve, a parent might put the toy away temporarily or turn off the TV for a half hour. The key here is to follow through, calmly and consistently. Of course, these are also opportune times to teach children strategies for working out their disagreements.

Conclusion

When fathers understand that disciplining their child is an opportunity to teach by words and actions, they will have an important role in helping their children learn appropriate behavior and self-control. Engaging in fun play, conversation, and the use of fair consequences are times when discipline can be used in positive, nurturing ways. ■

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W. Douglas Tynan is a clinical psychologist and Director of the Disruptive Behavior Clinic at A. I. duPont Hospital for Children, Wilmington DE . T: 302 651 4552, E: dtynan@nemours.org

RESEARCH FACTS: DADS AND CHILDREN'S LITERACY

Fifty African-American fathers participating in fatherhood programs, such as those in Head Start, wanted to support early literacy development in their young children. However, many felt challenged by the expectations attached to parenting roles and their own limited formal education. Yet, fathers who have limited schooling still have a significant impact on early literacy development through interactive engagement with their young children such as reading a bedtime story, identifying labels at the grocery store, or talking about street signs.

Gadsden, V.L., & Bowman, P. 1999. African American males and the struggle toward responsible fatherhood. In *A continuing challenge in times like these: African American males in schools and society*, (Eds. V. Polite & J. Davis). New York: Teachers College Press.

In a study of 47 fathers and their young children in New Mexico, fathers not only engaged in literacy activities but strengthened their parent-child relationship in the process. Fathers whose primary language was not English wanted their children to develop literacy skills at an early age because of concerns about their school readiness skills. Engaging children in joint literacy activities can serve a dual purpose: strengthening literacy skills and socio-emotional skills.

Ortiz, R., Stile, S., & Brown, C. 1999. Early literacy activities of fathers: Reading and writing with

Photo by J. Brough-Schamp. Higher Horizons HSEHS.



Literacy development is promoted when dads talk with their children.

young children. *Young Children*, 54(5), 16-18.

A study of children in K-2nd grades suggested that Mexican-American fathers who shared child rearing duties with their spouses, as opposed to dividing these tasks, were more likely to engage in reading and writing activities with their children. It was easier for fathers to engage their children in literacy activities when coupled with other responsibilities, such as bath-time when books could be read.

Ortiz, R. 1996. Fathers' contribution to children's early literacy development: The relationship of marital role functions. *Journal of Educational Issues of Language Minority Students*, 16, Boise State University.

Children who grow up with warm, nurturing, and actively involved fathers reap tremendous benefits, including better school performance, increased self-esteem, healthier relationships with peers and caregivers, and future access to greater financial resources, according to a

recent review of the research. In fact, children's potential for academic success begins long before school age. When fathers read to their young children on a regular basis, they tend to raise children who are superior readers, who perform better in school, and who have better relationship skills.

Green, S. 2002. Involving fathers in children's literacy development: An introduction to the Fathers Reading Every Day (FRED) Program. *Journal of Extension*, 40(5), www.joe.org.

Fathers can ensure that their children's early literacy development is stimulated by reading to their newborns and continuing this activity at home and in early childhood education settings. For example, fathers can read and select books with their children at the library; allow children to scribble, write, and color; introduce new vocabulary words through reading; and identify letters and important words such as their names. In addition to joint literacy activities, fathers can just talk with their children, an often under-rated parent-child activity, to strengthen relationship bonds.

Gadsden, V. & Ray, A. 2002. Fathers' role in children's academic achievement and early literacy. *Eric Digest*, EDO-PS-03-14.

Fathers from African-American and Latino cultures engage in the same kinds

Continued on 60

BY FRANKIE HOOVER GIBSON

THE ROLE OF FATHERS IN HEAD START

HEAD START HAS ALWAYS UNDERSTOOD THAT THE FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT teachers children will ever have are their parents. We work with mothers and fathers, because we know that a well-functioning family can help young children grow and develop and get ready to succeed in school.

Both mothers and fathers are important for raising healthy and happy children. We want both parents to be involved in their child's Head Start program and, in fact, the *Head Start Program Performance Standards* mandate that programs work with parents and provide support services to the family. But in reality, sometimes dads are overlooked. Why? There may be a number of reasons:

- Some staff may not know how to get fathers involved.
- Some staff may assume that when fathers do not show up, it means they do not want to participate.
- Some staff may not see getting fathers involved, and helping fathers be better parents, as very important.
- Often the staff of the Head Start program are all or mostly women, who may identify more with moms than dads.
- Some staff may harbor negative feelings about fathers because of their own experiences.

Do any of these sound familiar?

Moms and dads alike need to see Head Start as a place to get help and support. Dads and moms need to know that Head Start can help them become better parents.

Here are some important goals for every Head Start program to consider:

- ▶ We recognize and gather information about both parents, to the maximum extent possible, regardless of their living arrangements.
- ▶ We include both parents, to the maximum extent possible, in the family partnership process.
- ▶ We make fathers feel welcome and supported at our Head Start program.
- ▶ We offer activities that will be meaningful to both fathers and mothers.
- ▶ We provide the services that fathers need, both on our own and through partnerships with employment training centers, faith-based organizations, family support and parenting

groups, and other community-based agencies.

- ▶ For mothers and fathers who want it, we offer help in strengthening relationships, including guidance on improving communication, on dealing with anger and resolving conflicts, and where appropriate, on building a strong and healthy marriage.

Even when Head Start staff wants to reach out to fathers, they may not know how. It is hoped that the diverse articles in this *Head Start Bulletin* will give you many ideas on how to involve fathers more effectively in your Head Start program. ■

Frankie Hoover Gibson is *Parent Involvement Specialist, Family/Community Partnerships, Head Start Bureau*. T: 202-205-8399; E: fgibson@acf.hhs.gov



Photo by K. Shearer. People Inc. of Southwest Virginia.

Head Start programs can help fathers feel welcome in the classrooms.

BY PAM WILSON

HOW CAN HEAD START STAFF SUPPORT FATHERHOOD EFFORTS?

THERE IS A ROLE FOR BOTH MALE AND FEMALE STAFF in Head Start fatherhood projects. The majority of Head Start administrators, teachers, and specialists are women, although fatherhood projects in particular have the goal of hiring male staff. To ensure that the fatherhood efforts are fully integrated into the services offered families, all staff must be committed and prepared to reach out to fathers.

Many are asking, “How can we support our Head Start staff in our fatherhood efforts?” The following suggestions may be useful:

[Provide staff development and training.](#)

All women and men who have been charged with developing or implementing a fatherhood program need comprehensive training and ongoing support. The goal is to provide them with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they will need to work effectively with fathers and other important men in the lives of Head Start children. At some point, participants attending training need the opportunity to explore their attitudes toward and experiences with important males in their own lives. Training also helps staff understand the specific needs of Head Start dads and begin to plan appropriate program activities. Participants often remark how helpful it is to “put a face on the fatherhood issue”



All staff must be committed and prepared to reach out to fathers.

and see dads as individuals, not as stereotypes.

[Keep the focus on what is good for the child.](#)

Head Start staff need to keep the child at the center of their work with parents. All staff, along with mothers and fathers, need to work together in the child’s best interest. But this can sometimes be difficult. Staff may feel awkward around the dads because they do not know them as well as they know the moms. If a mother describes the child’s father in negative ways or expresses anger at him, her feelings may be more about him

as an adult partner and not about his parenting. Staff can help moms make this distinction and understand how fathers can be positive influences on their children. It is important for staff to affirm that children learn and grow best when both parents are involved in their lives.

[View fathers from a strength-based perspective.](#)

In most Head Start programs, family service staff are women. Father involvement projects are often part of their jobs. There may not be additional funding to hire male staff. Female staff who have a genuine respect for men and see each

HOW CAN HEAD START STAFF SUPPORT FATHERHOOD EFFORTS?

man as an individual with the potential to be loving and responsible can work successfully in fatherhood projects. Every father will enter the program with certain strengths, as well as challenges. It is important for staff to look for these strengths and to avoid criticizing a man's parenting style just because it is different from the way they would parent. Head Start fathers need the same support and assistance that mothers need as they set goals and work toward them.

Use a team approach.

If a Head Start program has a male fatherhood involvement coordinator, the tendency can be to put all responsibility for male involvement on that person. In fact, all members of the Head Start team have to work together to support the family and the child. They each have to form a connection with the dads. Coordination of services is a must; all team members must think about the needs of fathers and how to address them. For example, a father with literacy issues might welcome assistance from a family literacy specialist. Classroom teachers can offer support by preparing materials for the father and child to read or do together at home. When staff members, both male and female, see themselves as part of the team working with all significant adults, fatherhood efforts are more likely to be successful.

Refine communication skills.

Staff members sometimes struggle with how to communicate effectively with dads. Is the communication process different with fathers than with mothers? In general, fathers may be less trusting of agencies and helpers. They also may see Head Start as a

When staff members, both male and female, see themselves as part of a team working with the significant adults in a child's life, fatherhood efforts are more likely to be successful.

place for children and mothers and not be sure where they, as dads, fit in. The best strategy is for staff to develop rapport and meet them where they are. Giving dads time to open up and conveying respect by using their names are important.

In training sessions, staff can role play what they would say or do in situations involving dads. For example, imagine that the father is sitting in the car while the mother goes into the Head Start center to pick up the child. A teacher sees him, but is not sure what to

say, so avoids him. How can she approach him and have a pleasant, meaningful exchange?

The best strategy is to be friendly, down-to-earth, and focused on the child's progress. An important part of any training is helping staff learn how to communicate effectively in many different situations with the men in children's lives.

Final Thoughts

Most Head Start staff members say they want to establish a positive relationship with the fathers of the children in their program. In one study of Early Head Start fatherhood programs, 93% of the staff reported that they had invited fathers to participate in events at the program, whereas only 44% of the fathers reported that they had been invited. The fact that Head Start fathers and staff have such different perceptions indicates the need for programs to analyze their policies and practices—to take a closer look at what they are doing to make fathers feel welcome. Working with Head Start staff, at all levels in all positions, both male and female, is key to creating father-friendly environments. ■

Pam Wilson is a consultant to fatherhood and male involvement programs. She is based in the Washington, D.C. area.
T: 301-894-8316; E: pamwilson@comcast.net

FATHER-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The Father-Friendly Environmental Assessment is designed to help prepare your program to provide services to fathers and support their involvement in the lives of their children.

Completing this form will help to steer your program toward successful father involvement efforts and help establish a firm foundation for building the rest of your work with fathers.

Directions: Walk through your center and complete the following assessment. If you are a woman, it might be useful to take a man with you.

Scoring:

- 2 points for having achieved this goal
- 1 point for some progress made
- 0 points for no action taken yet

A. First Impressions

The initial reception area is free of signs or posters that would be possibly intimidating for men, e.g., posters that target men as batterers. The name of the agency is neutral or inclusive of men. The receptionist is warm, friendly, and comfortable with men and fathers participating in program activities.

B. Physical Landscape

All visual materials include men and fathers of varied racial and ethnic backgrounds in positive roles; posters have positive, non-stereotypic messages. Magazines and brochures are relevant to both men and women. Materials are available in the home languages of the families.

C. Role Models

There are men present in the agency, including male staff working with parents and children in roles other than as van driver, cook, janitor, or accountant.

D. Linguistic Landscape

Verbal and nonverbal language and cues avoid stereotyped generalizations about men; there is no joking or humorous

Photo by J. Brough-Schamp. Higher Horizons HS/EHS.



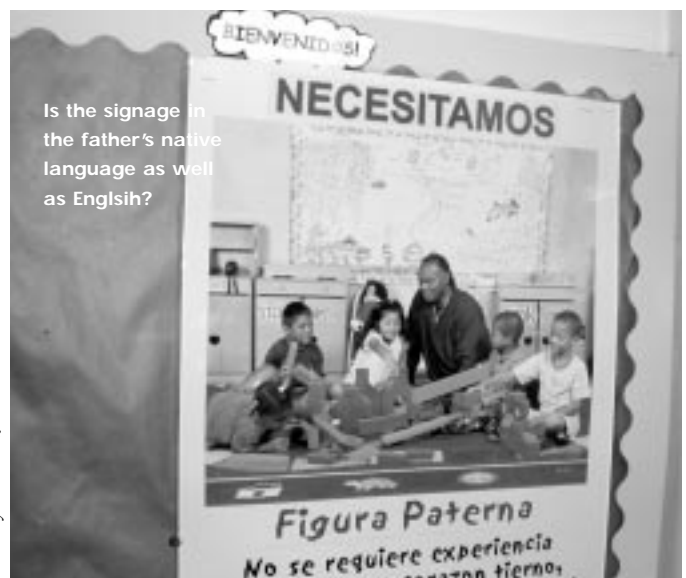
Do the staff expect fathers to be involved and welcome them?

conversation where men/fathers are the butt of the joke; there are no informal negative conversations about men to be overheard.

E. Materials/Activities for Parents

Equipment, resources, and types of parenting activities are diverse and relevant for both fathers and mothers. Specific brochures/publications are provided for fathers, and non-custodial fathers are recognized. Referral lists include services for

Photo by D. Mentzer. Rosemount Center HS/EHS.



Is the signage in the father's native language as well as English?

FATHER-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

fathers as well as mothers. Fathers are involved in planning and implementing fatherhood involvement programs and other activities for the agency.

Photo by J. Brough-Schamp, Higher Horizons HSE/HS.



F. Communications and Roles

Men in the agency, whether staff or fathers, are listened to with open minds; their ideas are considered thoughtfully. Differences in male/female communication styles are understood and respected – men are not expected to communicate exactly like women. Men are appreciated in both traditional and nontraditional roles. They are not asked to do all of the heavy labor tasks (but are appreciated if they volunteer to do these things). Their ability to be effective and appropriate in their interactions with young children is recognized.

G. Interaction with Parents

Mothers and fathers get equal respect and attention from staff. Fathers are addressed by name in their primary language, if possible. The staff expects fathers to be involved, welcomes them warmly, recognizes and respects differences in male and female parenting styles, and avoids “correcting” fathers as they interact with their children.

H. Classroom Environment

Father-friendly children’s books, including non-fiction, are available. Pictures, posters and other visual materials show fathers at work and at home. Materials are available that fathers might enjoy using with young children. Curriculum topics and learning experiences are chosen that appeal to men. Stereotypic presentations of men in books, posters, toys, or conversation are avoided.

TOTAL SCORE

Rating:

0-5 Just beginning

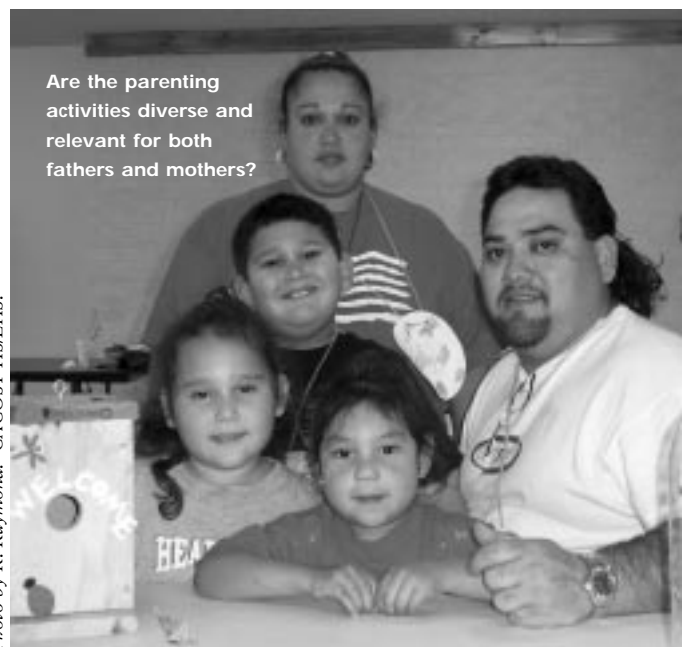
6-10 In process

11-14 Almost there

15-16 Congratulations!

This assessment form was sent to those attending The Father Factor: National Head Start Institute on Father Involvement and is included in the *Building Blocks for Father Involvement*. It was adapted from the Male-Friendliness Environment Audit developed by Pam Wilson under contract with the Head Start Bureau, 2001.

Photo by R. Raymond, CACOST HSE/HS.



BY HELEN RAIKES

FATHER INVOLVEMENT IN EARLY HEAD START: THE PRACTITIONERS STUDY

IN 2000 AND 2001, the Early Head Start Research Consortium conducted a survey to learn more about what Early Head Start programs were doing to involve fathers. Responses to this Web-based and paper survey (respondents could choose) were received from 261 Wave 1 through Wave 5 (programs funded in 1995 through 1998) Early Head Start programs. The 261 represented 63 percent of all programs actively offering services at the time. The study is part of an overall group of Father Studies that in turn is a part of the Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Project. Findings from the survey informed early understandings of father involvement in Early Head Start (EHS) and provided groundwork for the fatherhood demonstration project (see Bellotti, pages 24-26).

The study examined father populations at the sites as well as program goals, activities and strategies for engaging fathers in program services. It also examined program developmental stages for father involvement and identified what more mature father involvement programs were doing to involve the fathers.

Who were the fathers served by EHS?

The study found considerable variation in patterns of father presence in Early Head Start children's homes. The respondents estimated that about half of the EHS children had resident fathers (45%) and a quarter (25%) had nonresident fathers involved in their lives (saw or communicated with the child a few times a month over the past 3 months). In general, children with resident fathers were more likely to be found in EHS pro-

gram. On the other hand, there are profound differences in the proportion of families with resident fathers in each category across programs; these population variations are likely to create important



Photo by R. Raymond. CACOST HS/EHS.

The Practitioners Study provided groundwork for the fatherhood demonstration project in Early Head Start.

grams that were either home-based, served a majority of Hispanic families, served fewer teen parents or were located in rural areas. Most EHS programs (74%) served at least some children whose fathers were incarcerated (3 incarcerated fathers on average per program).

Thus, EHS programs are similar to one another in that nearly all serve some children who have resident fathers and some who have nonresident involved

differences in how EHS programs structure their approach to involving fathers.

How did EHS programs involve fathers?

In 2000-2001, most EHS programs were attempting to involve fathers at some level. Nearly all programs reported that they attempted to involve biological resident fathers through their program activities (99%); almost as many attempted to

THE PRACTITIONERS STUDY

reach a resident father or father figure who was not a biological father (95%). The majority of programs attempted to involve nonresident biological fathers (77%) and nonresident father figures (58%).

Programs used a variety of strategies to engage fathers.

- Nearly all (90% or more) programs issued open invitations to fathers (inviting fathers to participate in all program events) and ensured that the father's name was on the enrollment forms.
- Many programs (50-90%) displayed positive images of men in materials, referred fathers for services, worked with staff to become open to working with fathers, and worked to create an image of the program as one that serves fathers as well as mothers.
- A minority of programs used explicit practices such as hiring male staff, ensuring that mailing materials included fathers as well as mothers, conducting a needs assessment for fathers, providing training for staff on father involvement, and utilizing fathers and other men in recruiting fathers for program activities and as mentors. These may be activities that more programs will want to adopt in the future.

How involved were fathers in EHS program activities?

A majority of resident fathers had been involved in an EHS program activity

(59%), but only a minority had been highly involved (24%). Highly involved was defined as participating 3 times or more times per month in program activities. Additionally, some nonresident fathers were involved (30%), but fewer than 10% of these nonresident fathers were highly involved.

How far along were EHS programs in implementing a father involvement component?

Programs appeared to evolve through stages in providing father involvement activities. In the survey, programs categorized themselves into one of five stages which had been identified in earlier qualitative work by the Early Head Start Research Consortium.

Stages I and II: Early stage programs for father involvement comprised 72% of all programs. At Stage I (6%) little, if any, thought had been given to the unique issues involving a parent other than the mother or to how best to plan father involvement. Stage II (66%) programs involved some fathers and had given some thought and effort to father involvement but it was not a priority of the program.

Stage III: The mid-stage programs (21% of all programs) demonstrated a concerted effort to involve fathers. Some exciting and promising changes were occurring as more staff and parents gained a sense of how to make the program more father-friendly. Typically, a father involvement coordinator had been

hired and that person did a good job of keeping other staff aware of father involvement and in promoting a number of father involvement activities.

Stages IV and V: Mature programs for father involvement (7%) made many changes to make their programs father-friendly. A father involvement coordinator focused on integrating fathers into the program at all levels; the program was often as focused on fathers as the target of program activities as on mothers and babies. Many resident fathers were involved at Stage IV (6% of the programs) and at Stage V (1%) most resident and many non-resident fathers were involved in the program.

What were the practices of mature father involvement programs?

In 2000-2001, a small number of programs (7%) were demonstrating what a mature father involvement program in Early Head Start could be. Mature programs differed from early-stage and mid-stage programs in a number of ways.

1. Mature programs had a wider range of goals for their father involvement programs than other programs. They emphasized supporting fathers as parents more than other programs but also emphasized programming that helped fathers' personal development. These mature programs also saw themselves serving as resources in the community for fathers.

2. Mature programs hired a father involvement coordinator. Nearly all

mature programs (94%) had named one or two persons to be responsible for leadership and day-to-day management for father involvement with the program as compared to only 38% for early stage programs. Generally, the father involvement coordinator in mature programs was a man.

3. Mature programs provided training for a father involvement coordinator but also provided training for all staff in father involvement. For example, 89% of mature programs provided training for a father involvement coordinator compared to only 14% for early-stage programs, and 78% of the mature programs also provided training for all staff on father involvement (28% for early-stage programs).

4. Mature programs involved both resident fathers and nonresident fathers. Mature programs reported that many of the resident fathers (65%) were involved in their program at some level and that nearly half (41%) were highly involved. A majority (56%) of these programs made a strong effort to involve many nonresident fathers in the program when there was no other father figure in the family (vs. 11% of early-stage programs). More than a third of mature programs (40%) serving children whose fathers were incarcerated said they made a strong effort to reach out to those fathers compared to 5% of early-stage programs. Mature programs mailed progress notes, conducted home visits in prison, and pre-

The majority of EHS programs studied attempted to involve nonresident biological fathers (77%) and nonresident father figures (58%).

pared duplicate materials of program reports for the incarcerated fathers.

5. Mature Programs recruited fathers in diverse ways. Like early-stage programs, mature programs asked mothers to encourage the men to get involved, but they also drew heavily on male networks to recruit fathers for EHS.

6. Mature programs involved fathers despite difficult situations. By sensitively working with family members, mature programs were significantly more likely to successfully involve the father in EHS even when the mother or the mother's family initially did not want the father involved; when the mother and the father were in conflict; when the father was involved in domestic violence; or when the father was not paying his share of child support.

7. Mature programs faced challenges in involving fathers, as did all EHS programs, but they were different ones. Early stage programs most often reported that the greatest barriers to father involvement were program factors such as lack-

ing male staff members to whom fathers could relate. Mature programs' greatest barrier reported was fathers and mothers who were not living together.

8. Mature programs worked closely with other agencies within their communities. Mature programs (50%) were more likely to have had a relationship with the local child support enforcement agency (vs. 28% for early stage programs) and to have referred fathers to other agencies providing services related to domestic violence, substance abuse, and employment training than were early stage programs (89% vs. 67%). These significant differences echo the comments made in focus groups by some mature program staff—that the program “works within the village.”

9. Mature programs could identify key successes. Mature programs were significantly more likely than others to have identified the key ingredients for building their programs:

- creating a father needs assessment,
- providing training for all staff working with men and for father involvement coordinators,
- recruiting fathers who completed the program to work as mentors, recruiters, and group facilitators, and
- creating a program image that makes it clear the program is designed for fathers.

These successes suggest leverage activities for Early Head Start as well as Head Start programs looking for the best

Continued on 60

BY JEANNE BELLOTTI

LESSONS FROM THE EARLY HEAD START FATHERHOOD DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

IN FEBRUARY 2001, THE ADMINISTRATION ON CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES (ACYF) partnered with the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) to fund 21 Early Head Start (EHS) fatherhood demonstration projects. The demonstration grantees were selected through a competitive process and funded for three years. Their goal was to develop and implement innovative practices to increase the involvement of fathers in EHS and in the lives of their children. Each grantee was expected to establish a partnership with the local OCSE and other organizations to develop comprehensive plans for delivering services that encourage responsible parenting among EHS fathers and mothers. ACYF provided basic guidelines, but grantees had flexibility in developing their goals and service structure.

Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR) is conducting a process evaluation for ACYF to provide a detailed look at the evolution of the demonstration's implementation and participants' experiences. From the evaluation, several lessons have emerged about designing, implementing, and supporting fatherhood initiatives within EHS (Bellotti et al. 2003; Bellotti 2002). The demonstration grantees' experiences can guide policymakers, program administrators, and practitioners as they design and implement new initiatives to increase fathers' involvement in Head Start programs.

The evaluation tracked the progress of the 21 demonstration programs using three data sources.

- First, MPR conducted site visits to all 21 grantees after the first and second years of implementation and a final visit at the end of three years

Photo courtesy of Cherokee Nation HS.



Many EHS programs involved fathers in culturally appropriate activities with the children.

to a subset of 9 programs. We interviewed fathers, staff from Early Head Start, and local OCSE staff.

- Second, after the second and third years, we asked EHS directors, fatherhood staff, home visitors and family workers, and teachers at each participating program to complete a survey on program strategies for involving fathers. We modeled this survey on the instrument used in the practitioner's study (Raikes et al. 2002).
- Finally, after the second and third years of implementation, we asked staff at each program to provide data on the characteristics, involvement, and program participation of the fathers of each child enrolled in EHS.

In this article, we discuss our research findings through the second year of implementation (2001-2003); findings from the final year of opera-

tions will be available later in 2004.

Characteristics of the Fathers of Children Enrolled in EHS. Many fathers and father figures are involved in their children's lives and in the EHS programs. Of the 1,743 children on whom we collected father data, program staff reported that 79 percent had at least one father or father figure currently involved in their lives. Of these, 84 percent were the child's biological father; 16 percent were father figures. About 41 percent were married to the child's mother, and more than 70 percent of fathers lived with their children—although in urban compared to rural and suburban programs, fathers were less likely to be living in the home and married to the mother of the child.

Developing a Fatherhood Staffing Structure. By the second year of implementation (2002-2003), two-thirds of the demonstration programs had a fatherhood coordinator and one or more specialists. The coordinator-specialist structure appeared to best facilitate the effective allocation of responsibilities, including program development, program management, and direct service provision. Finding and retaining qualified staff for these positions, however, was challenging for many programs—more than half experienced fatherhood staff turnover within the first two years. Programs reported that fatherhood members need academic qualifications and strong interpersonal and communication skills. Those who were integrated into an exist-

ing EHS staff group, frequently communicated with other staff, or had an “open-door policy” for staff questions appeared better able to coordinate comprehensive services for families. Focus groups with fathers also revealed that many fathers felt more comfortable discussing personal needs with male fatherhood staff than with female staff and appreciated the presence of men among the predominantly female EHS staff.

Training Staff on Father

Involvement. The demonstration programs believe all staff must be trained on the importance of father involvement. Most respondents to our survey cited staff training as the most successful strategy for making their programs more father-friendly. During site visit interviews, many programs reported that some female staff members have had negative personal experiences with men, which can sometimes color their attitude toward engaging fathers in the program. According to fatherhood staff and program directors, internal staff training sessions often made female staff more receptive to including men.

Engaging Fathers in EHS. All programs agreed that father recruitment was a significant challenge and encouraged programs interested in involving fathers not to underestimate its difficulty. After two years of implementation, EHS directors reported that they still face barriers to father involvement—including fathers’ work schedules, reluctance from some mothers, an image that

EHS is for women, and an overall lack of male involvement in the program. Programs had experimented with several strategies, however, and began to develop practices they perceived as successful in reaching men.



Photo by B. Wood. Wabash Area Development HS/EHS

Fathers enjoyed “daddy and me” time with their children.

Nearly 95 percent of survey respondents said their programs invite fathers to all aspects of EHS to show them they are welcome. Staff reported that it is critical to encourage fathers to attend the enrollment session, and at that time, highlight services for fathers and families regardless of whether the father is present at the enrollment meeting, and collect father information through enrollment forms. From the start, programs found it important to encourage all EHS staff to learn fathers’ names, engage fathers in conversation, and invite them to participate in the classroom, home visits, and special program events. Staff reported that displaying positive images of men and ensuring that male staff and fathers are

present in reception areas and classrooms whenever possible helped convey that EHS is a program for fathers, not just for mothers and children.

Offering Services to Meet Fathers’ Needs. Many fathers engaged in at least some of the EHS activities. Of the fathers identified by staff as involved in their children’s lives, about 70 percent were reported to have participated in at least one activity in a six-month period. Nevertheless, many programs found it more difficult to engage fathers than anticipated and needed to adjust their service offerings accordingly. Among the fathers who participated in any activity, child development services drew the largest number, with 69 and 51 percent participating in home-based and center-based activities, respectively. When working with fathers who hesitated to interact with children, teachers and home visitors succeeded in directing fathers toward concrete activities—such as reading to the children, helping with meals, or playing games—while explaining how the activity will benefit their children’s development. Having male staff and other participating fathers interact with the children also helped fathers feel more comfortable participating.

Programs reported a growth in father-child and family activities as a result of the programs’ efforts to reach out to fathers. At the end of two years, 53 and 50 percent of participating fathers had attended father-child and family events, respectively. Fathers

LESSONS FROM THE EHS DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

reported enjoying “daddy and me” time with their children. Several programs created special initiatives to encourage fathers to read to their children. The demonstration programs also offered holiday events and low-budget activities that families could replicate on their own, such as feeding the birds in the park or flying kites.

Father-only activities were common, with programs reporting that 43 percent of fathers who had participated in at least one activity took advantage of these services. Nearly all the demonstration programs offered peer support for fathers, adjusting the structure, content, and timing of their meetings based on fathers’ interests and needs. Activities such as sporting events or camping trips allowed staff and fathers to get to know each other and develop mutual trust. Programs sought to increase fathers’ ability to financially support their children by offering employment and training services. Many demonstration programs found that offering incentives to the men for their participation—such as food and T-shirts—kept them coming back.

Supporting Positive Co-Parenting Relationships. Most of the demonstration programs found a focus on co-parenting consistent with their program goals and responsive to family needs. Many staff members, however, did not feel comfortable providing advice to couples about their relationship. Staff reported that 71 percent of all fathers and only 45 percent of nonresident biological fathers had rela-

tionships with the focal child’s mother that were “very friendly.” Five programs had activities to promote healthy co-parenting relationships—including co-parenting education sessions, support groups for both mothers and fathers, and social and recreational activities. Some programs also strengthened partnerships with other local agencies—such as mental health professionals, marriage and family services, and anger management counselors—that could serve as referrals for parents.

Partnering with OCSEs. As mandated by their demonstration grants, 17 of the 21 programs were collaborating with their local OCSE by the end of their second year (2002-2003). Most collaborations focused on disseminating information on child support to staff and families, usually through workshops and printed materials. Three programs were working with intermediaries to provide specialized services for individual fathers, including advocating for modifications to support orders and arrearages and reinstatement of suspended drivers’ licenses.

Conclusion

Through this study, we have identified promising strategies that the EHS Fatherhood Demonstration programs used to reach out to fathers and meet their needs as parents, as well as the common implementation barriers they encountered along the way. Many grantees have found it challenging to fully integrate services for fathers into EHS, but they are clearly making

progress. Our continued research on the final year of the demonstration (2003-2004) will offer valuable insights into the evolution of program practices, staff perceptions of greatest accomplishments, and program plans for sustaining meaningful father involvement initiatives after the dedicated grant funding ends. ■

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Jeanne Bellotti is a Researcher at Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.
T: 609-799-3535;
E: jbellotti@mathematica-mpr.com

HEALTHY MARRIAGE MATTERS TO ACF

Background

Research suggests that family structure is related to child well-being. All things being equal, children who grow up in healthy married, two-parent families do better on a host of outcomes than those who do not. Further, many social problems affecting children, families, and communities could be prevented if more children grew up in healthy, married families.

Examples of social science findings include:

- Married couples seem to build more wealth, on average, than singles or cohabiting couples, thus decreasing the likelihood that their children will grow up in poverty.
- Children who live in a two-parent, married household enjoy better physical health, on average, than children in non-married households.
- Marriage reduces the risk of adults and children either perpetrating, or being victimized by, violent crime.

Congress acknowledged the importance of married-couple families when it reformed the welfare system in 1996. The 1996 legislation stipulated that three out of the four purposes of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program either directly or indirectly promote healthy marriages. President Bush echoed this sentiment when he indicated that healthy marriages would be a focus of his administration. In proclaiming National Family Week in November 2001, he noted:

"My Administration is committed to strengthening the American family. Many one-parent families are also a source of comfort and reassurance, yet a family with a mom and dad who are committed to marriage and devote themselves to their children helps provide children a sound foundation for success. Government can support families by promoting policies that help strengthen the institution of marriage and help parents rear their children in positive and healthy environments."

ACF Healthy Marriage Initiative

The Healthy Marriage Initiative is about *helping couples, who have already chosen marriage for themselves, gain access to marriage education services, on a voluntary basis, where they can acquire the skills and knowledge to form and sustain a healthy marriage.* In practical terms, it involves:

Developing demonstrations. In consultation with states, many communities have approached ACF to conduct healthy marriage demonstration projects. These are broad-based efforts to work with key community sectors (e.g., local governments, businesses, civic organizations, non-profits) to strengthen marriages.

Emphasizing marriage in Federal programs. ACF's program offices are promoting healthy marriages in every appropriate program. For example, marriage education and enrichment services are being provided, alongside existing services, to low-income couples who utilize Refugee Resettlement, Children's Bureau, Community Services, or TANF services.

Conducting research. This initiative is using existing funds to explore the types of marriage strengthening services that exist and their effectiveness, so that future resources can be targeted more wisely.

Training. The initiative is providing training about healthy marriage issues to interested Federal ACF staff.

This initiative is **not** about:

- Trapping anyone in an abusive or violent relationship.
- Forcing anyone to get or stay married.

- Running a federal dating service.
- Withdrawing supports from or diminishing in any way, either directly or indirectly, the important work of single parents.

Sources of Funding for Healthy Marriage Initiatives:

The pending House welfare reauthorization bill (HR 4) includes funding for healthy marriage education and research. To review the complete bill, go to <http://www.thomas.loc.gov> (search bill number HR 4).

Education. Section 103 of HR 4 indicates:

Amount of funds: \$100 million, annually, for fiscal years 2003 to 2008.

Who can apply for funds: States, Tribes and Territories; however, these three eligible applicants can allow private partners to help them implement the activities funded under the grant.

Required matching funds: Grantees must provide a dollar for dollar match. Federal funds received for TANF can be used as match, and the match can be in-kind.

Allowable activities: Funds provided shall be used to support any of the following eight programs or activities:

Public advertising campaigns on the value of marriage and the skills needed to increase marital stability and health.

Education in high schools on the value of marriage, relationship skills, and budgeting.

Marriage education, marriage skills, and relationship skills programs, that may include parenting skills, financial management, conflict resolution, and job and career advancement, for non-married pregnant women and non-married expectant fathers.

Pre-marital education and marriage skills training for engaged couples and for couples or individuals interested in marriage.

Marriage enhancement and marriage skills training programs for married couples.

Divorce reduction programs that teach relationship skills.

Marriage mentoring programs which use married couples as role models and mentors in at-risk communities.

Programs to reduce the disincentives to marriage in means-tested aid programs, if offered in conjunction with any activity described in this subparagraph.

Research, Demonstrations and Technical Assistance. Section 115 of HR 4 provides for additional funding:

Amount of funds: \$102 million annually from fiscal year 2003 through 2008.

Who may apply for funds: Public or private entities.

Required matching funds: None.

Allowable activities: Research, technical assistance, and demonstration projects to be spent primarily on activities described above.

A comparable Senate bill will likely be introduced in 2004.

Additional Information: For more information, or to request technical assistance, visit the ACF website at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/key.html>.

Or contact Bill Coffin, Special Assistant for Marriage Education, at bc Coffin@acf.hhs.gov or (202)260-1550.

BY MONA IVEY-SOTO

ADDRESSING THE MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF HEAD START FATHERS

Providing Guidance

CURRENTLY, THERE IS A NATIONAL Head Start initiative to strengthen and support fathers and to enhance their involvement in parenting. Addressing the mental health needs of Head Start fathers is an important aspect of the fatherhood effort.

Family support workers, parent or male involvement coordinators, mental health specialists, and social workers may be among the Head Start staff providing mental health support to dads. They need to be well-grounded in strategies that allow them to respond to the dads' individual struggles and to promote their well-being and their parenting. The same is true for the community partners and professionals outside the Head Start agency who address the mental health issues of the dads.

Meeting the Mental Health Needs of Fathers

The first step in dealing with the complexity of fathers' mental health and well-being is demystifying the words "mental health." The stigma associated with mental health often inhibits individuals from seeking care. For example, in some communities "acknowledging mental or emotional distress is associated with being weak or not acting like a man" (Satcher 2003). This stigma can be so powerful that young men, particularly fathers, are hesitant to engage and build relation-



Photo courtesy of the Visiting Nurse Service of New York EHS.

Successful fatherhood programs build on the strengths and abilities of each father.

ships with programs and with staff who may be able to support them.

Yet, the ongoing emotional state of a father has a profound impact on the emotional world of his young child. When a father is depressed, his interactions with and responsiveness to his young child are likely to be negatively affected. He may not engage in eye contact, touching, talking, singing, and laughing. The child may withdraw, attempting to self-soothe, or on the other hand, engage in challenging behaviors, attempting to engage the parent. As staff help fathers deal with their mental health issues like depression, the dads, in turn, are better able to provide care and love to their young children.

Some populations of fathers are especially at risk for mental health

challenges, including depression.

Research indicates that low-income, under-educated, and young fathers are vulnerable. Findings of an Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Project concluded that 18 percent of the fathers reported enough symptoms to be considered depressed when their children were 2 years old; 16 percent when their children were 3 years old (CORE 1996).

Data from the Visiting Nurse Service of New York Early Head Start program corroborates these general findings. Many of the children's fathers experienced psychosocial risk factors such as alcohol and/or substance abuse, domestic violence, depression, or anxiety that negatively affected their ability to parent. (Jones 2004). They had limited

parenting skills and little knowledge of child development.

Although there is no one “right” way to go about addressing the mental health needs of fathers, there are guiding principles that programs can follow.

Grounding in Principles

Underlying the work related to fathers’ mental health are two principles: it must be strengths-based and it must partner with fathers.

Strengths-based work implies first recognizing and discussing the inherent strengths of an individual and then building on them to enhance self-understanding, establish trust, and foster change. Every individual has strengths and abilities despite the overwhelming adversity of their past life or their current condition. To take this perspective, staff must be accepting, not judgmental.

Partnering with fathers means that staff members collaborate with fathers. The visual picture is that of a staff member and a father walking side by side as equals. The staff person makes every effort to listen to and connect with the thoughts, issues, goals, and dreams of a father and support the father along his personal journey.

Before any mental health issues can be addressed or resolved, a healthy relationship must be established between the service provider and the father. Relationships are more likely to form

when the elements of *trust, empowerment, and inclusion* are in place.

Trust

In the Visiting Nurse EHS program, a support group was one way that trust was built between the clinical director, David Jones, who facilitated the group, and the fathers who

Before any mental health needs can be addressed or resolved, a healthy relationship must be established between the service provider and the father.

attended. Within the support group, referred to as Fathers First, fathers and father figures reflected and discussed their mental health successes and challenges.

Getting these fathers on board was not an overnight success. Often Mr. Jones would venture out into the local community where the fathers lived and worked. In the course of a day, he might visit a dad at the local courthouse, or stop by a pediatric clinic or take a lunch break at a father’s job site or school. All this took time and

patience on his part, but the fathers began to recognize that Mr. Jones truly cared for them and that he was willing to meet them where they were at—even if that place was out-of-the way or unfamiliar to him. Gradually, they opened up in the support group, beginning to shed layers of pain and disappointment. Some fathers discussed how the lack of positive attachment to an early caregiver due to abuse or abandonment had affected their ability to trust.

Addressing their pain through non-threatening activities, such as storytelling, poetry, and open discussions helped the fathers begin to heal (Jones, 2004). They read chapters in selected books and described how certain themes related to their own lives. Some fathers wrote poetry describing their struggles with poverty, relationships, and survival on the streets (Jones 2004). As the fathers shared their struggles and hardships in the support group, they developed and sustained a deeper level of trust with each other and a commitment to the group.

Empowerment

For some fathers, the bond with their child may be their first strong connection to another person. When programs help dads strengthen that bond and express their love for their children, the dads gain confidence and improve their self-esteem. In the Visiting Nurse EHS program, parent/child groups

ADDRESSING THE MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF HEAD START FATHERS

An agency must evaluate itself from the inside out to assess its ability to provide respectful and individualized services for fathers, and staff must understand and support father involvement..

helped fathers learn to engage in developmentally appropriate games and activities. The goals were to create pride and success for fathers and to enhance the ties between fathers and their children. The majority of the EHS fathers also participated in the Reading is Fundamental (RIF) program. They picked out quality books for their infants and toddlers and read to them. These shared moments promoted learning and literacy for the children and enhanced the self-worth and well-being of the dads.

Fathers also feel empowered and gain a stronger sense of self when they meet educational goals and experience job success. The EHS program held a General Equivalency Diploma (GED) class onsite through a collaboration with the local Board of Education and offered other resources to develop job skills.

Inclusion

The Visiting Nurse program valued inclusion—that is, creating an environment that includes all people and that recognizes the uniqueness of each individual. The Clinical Director writes, “Creating a culture of inclusion culmi-

nates with an internal evaluation of an agency or organization’s ability and level of readiness to provide services for fathers” (Jones 2004). An agency must not only evaluate itself from the inside out to assess its ability to provide respectful and individualized services for fathers, staff must understand and support father involvement. They also must be willing to process their own internal issues or ideologies related to their past and current experiences with men.

Internal self talk and reflective supervision are key elements in this process (Jones 2004). In the Visiting Nurse program, staff and supervisors met one-on-one or in a group. In a safe and unrushed environment, they processed feelings, experiences, choices, and beliefs. Staff came to their own conclusions and formulated their own action plan. This model of reflective supervision differs from the more traditional one where supervisors are thought to have all the answers.

Experiencing Success

Where there are strong partnerships and a strengths-based approach guiding

the work with fathers, Head Start staff often see an increase in the use of mental health services. When the program nurtures fathers and supports them on their journey toward mental health, everyone benefits—the dads, their children, other family members, and the Head Start community. ■

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Mona Ivey-Soto is a Head Start Fellow.

T: 202-205-8034;

E: mivey-soto1@acf.hhs.gov.

The author appreciates the generous contributions of David Jones, Clinical Director at the Visiting Nurse Service of New York Early Head Start in Rockaway, NY, to this article. T: 718-318-8071; E: djones@vnsny.org

BY DAVID JONES

FATHER POETRY

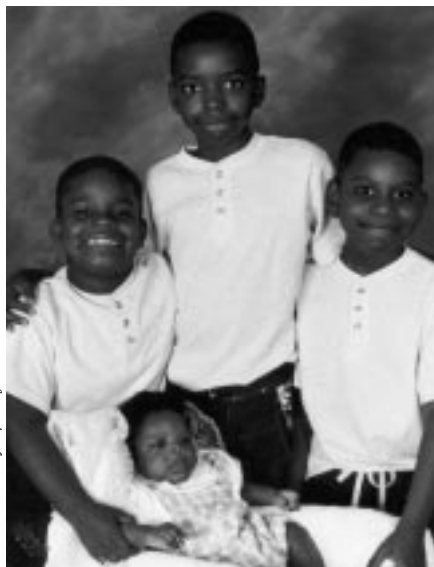


Photo courtesy of D. Jones.

Some programs encourage fathers to tell stories or write poems about their lives.

AIM

I spoke with my son today
About attitude
And just what that means
He stared up at me
With eyes so bright
Giving me a smile
You see if I don't do it
Society will raise my child
I spoke with my son today
About intelligence
And just what that means
He stood there telling me
All that a boy of eight
Might know
I shuddered as he walked away
It'd be a long time before I let him go
As he walked away I too
Became consumed with a smile
You see if I don't do it
Society will raise my child
I spoke with my son today
About memories
I asked him to recall

He mentioned how
I'd always been there when he was Very
small
To tie his shoe
Teach him manners
And respect
Discipline on command
Explain to him the geometry
Of life and difficulties
Of being a man
Of trips to the park
Walks in the dark
Long rides in the car
Of the very first day
Basketball he did play

And though they lost
I praised him all the while
Of parents-teachers nights
Birthdays and bad cut hair
The time when I was in the hospital
And he sat in my chair

Of arguments with his brother
And how they got resolved
Of how being the oldest sibling
Always keeps him involved
Of love and concern
And my just being there
Explaining to him in life
The things that weren't fair
After hearing all this
We both had to smile
A focused young brother
Society would have to wait a little while

They'll never get the chance
To raise my black child.

BY FRANKIE HOOVER GIBSON

WHY IS A FAMILY STORY BOOK IMPORTANT?

THE 21ST CENTURY EXPLORING PARENTING PROGRAM offers mothers and fathers suggestions for positive parent/child interactions in everyday settings and strengthens confidence in their role as their child's first and most important teacher. Creating a Family Story Book as an ongoing record offers a valuable opportunity for parents and children to reflect on the family's interests, cultural background, and values. The Family Story Book also can strengthen bonds by honoring everyday parent and child experiences. It also can enhance literacy and learning development as the family works together using words and pictures and discusses how best to tell their story.

Parents and Sharing

Parents often wish to reflect on how to create good memories for their child. They are constantly adding new chapters to their lives that can be put in the Family Story Book. Children will enjoy participating in creating the story book too. They can be involved in making pages for the book by drawing pictures and dictating a caption or telling a story incorporating souvenirs and interesting materials.



It's fun to talk on the phone.

As pages are completed, the family can read and discuss them together. Young children will enjoy looking at the photographs and artwork. (See the *Tips for Creating a Family Story Book* in the



Photos by D. Mentzer.

That's me—a little baby.

pullout for the *Head Start Bulletin* (page 33)).

Steps to Literacy and Learning

The Family Story Book is a way to keep a record of parent and child experiences. It can enhance literacy development and offers a close tie to literacy and learning. Parents and children can see how a book is made by contributing material and assembling the book. The process will teach them how to put words and pictures in the book, how to tell a story using pictures, and how to listen to and discuss a story.

As the Family Story Book grows, parents and children can enjoy sharing the keepsake with other Head Start parents, family members, and friends. The family can strengthen literacy skills and build good literacy habits as they discuss their family story and their experiences making, sharing, and adding to the book.

Other Methods

Families also can preserve their thoughts and experiences in mural, audiotape or video form. These methods are wonderful ways to capture special events like birthday parties, holidays, weddings, and trips.



My daddy helps me put on my shoes.

For additional information about *The 21st Century Exploring Parenting Program*, contact: Frankie Gibson, 330 C St. SW, Room 2110, Head Start Bureau, Washington, DC T: 202-205-8399 E: fgibson@acf.hhs.gov ■



I like to kiss my baby brother.

TIPS FOR CREATING A FAMILY STORY BOOK

These suggestions are ways to make your Family Story Book long lasting. But most importantly—just do it—and in the process enjoy it with your children and other family members.

PREPARING YOUR MATERIALS

- **Think about family backgrounds and stories to pass on to children.** Consider your own strongest family memories and what memories of childhood you want your child to have. Think about current family routines and activities as stories.
- **Collect the materials you will need.** Use quality materials—fade resistant and acid-free colored paper is best. Gather glue or other adhesive; scissors and paper-edges in patterns; rulers, pencils, erasers, a hole punch, camera, and a 3-ring binder for the story book cover.
- **Collect items to include.** Make hand or footprints for the book using paper and paint. Take pictures of family members doing everyday activities—waking up, eating meals, playing, going to and from Head Start, and going to sleep at night.
- **Gather souvenirs and keepsakes to include—**photocopies of marriage and birth certificates, babies' ID bracelets from the hospital, greeting cards and letters, children's artwork, ticket stubs, pressed flowers or leaves, party napkins, magazine pictures, and old photos.

ASSEMBLING YOUR FAMILY STORY BOOK

- **Make the Family Story Book a record of daily life as you live it.** Use your souvenirs and keepsakes.
- **Use photos to tell stories.** Try out a variety of ways to display photos and use interesting materials. The photos can be cropped; you can use templates and make mats, corners, and decorative edges.
- **Write about the photos to create a record of family life that brings back memories and stimulates storytelling.**
- **Make a list of children's favorite games and play activities and decorate it with artwork.** Include it in the story book along with pictures of children at play from magazines or use family photos that show your child playing favorite games.
- **Create mini-posters of your child's stage of development for the story book.**
- **Create a page showing the family enjoying their favorite activities like exercising, enjoying playgrounds, playing sports, picnicking, cooking, reading, or other pastimes.**
- **Supplement photos and drawings with pictures you and your children find in magazines and catalogues.**

CONTINUING YOUR FAMILY'S STORY

The Family Story Book can continue as the family grows and changes. Collect items to add in the future and encourage your children to save and add their own keepsakes.

HOJA DESPRENDIBLE—CONSEJOS PARA CREAR UN LIBRO DE HISTORIAS FAMILIARES

Estas sugerencias representan algunas formas en las cuales usted puede hacer que su libro de historias familiares sea duradero. Sin embargo, lo más importante es: simplemente crearlo y aprovechar este proceso para disfrutarlo con sus niños y con otros integrantes de su familia.

PREPARE SUS MATERIALES

- Piense sobre los orígenes e historias de su familia que pueda transmitir a los niños. Dedique algunos momentos y piense en los recuerdos familiares que tiene más grabados en su memoria y aquellos recuerdos de su infancia que le gustaría que su hijo también tuviera. Piense en las rutinas y las actividades familiares que realiza normalmente y cómo podría convertirlas en historias.
- Reúna los materiales que va a utilizar. Use materiales de calidad; recuerde que el papel de mejor calidad es aquel sin ácido y que no destiñe. Necesitará pegamento u otros adhesivos, tijeras y bordes de papel con diseños, reglas, lápices, un perforador, una cámara fotográfica y un archivador de 3 argollas para crear la portada del libro.
- Reúna los artículos que va a incluir en su proyecto. Haga impresiones de manos o de pies para el libro, utilizando papel y pintura. Tome fotografías de su familia mientras realizan actividades diarias, es decir, cuando están despertando, comiendo, jugando, de ida y vuelta de su programa Head Start, y preparándose para dormir en la noche.
- Reúna souvenirs y recuerdos que pueda incluir en el libro, como por ejemplo: fotocopias de certificados de matrimonio y de nacimiento, las pulseras de identificación de los niños cuando estaban recién nacidos en el hospital, tarjetas de saludos y cartas, arte de los niños, talones de boletos, flores u hojas secas prensadas, servilletas de fiestas, ilustraciones de revistas y fotografías antiguas.

CÓMO ARMAR SU LIBRO DE HISTORIAS FAMILIARES

- Haga el libro de historias familiares como una crónica que registre su vida familiar. Use souvenirs y recuerdos.
- Utilice fotografías para contar las historias. Pruebe distintas formas de cómo puede exhibir sus fotografías y use materiales que sean interesantes. Las fotografías pueden ser recortadas; también puede usar diseños ya hechos y crear fondos, esquinas y bordes decorativos.
- Escriba sobre estas fotografías para crear una crónica de la vida de la familia que trae recuerdos y estimula la narración de historias.
- Haga una lista de los juegos y actividades favoritos de los niños y decórelas con distintos tipos de arte. Inclúyalos en el libro de historias junto a fotografías de niños jugando que haya sacado de revistas, o bien use sus propias fotografías familiares que muestren a su hijo realizando sus juegos favoritos.
- Cree mini afiches de la etapa de desarrollo de su hijo que pueda incluir en el libro.
- Cree una página que muestre a la familia mientras disfruta sus actividades favoritas, es decir, haciendo ejercicio, jugando en los patios, haciendo deporte, en un picnic, cocinando, leyendo o en otros pasatiempos similares.
- Complemente las fotografías y dibujos con ilustraciones que usted y su niño encuentren en revistas y catálogos.

CÓMO CONTINUAR LA HISTORIA DE SU FAMILIA

El libro de historias familiares puede continuar a medida que la familia va creciendo y cambiando. Junte artículos que pueda agregar en el futuro e incentive a sus niños a que guarden y agreguen sus propios recuerdos en el libro.

BY BULLETIN STAFF WITH MICHAEL RIVERA

ACTION FOR BOSTON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT— A VARIETY OF APPROACHES

SINCE 1998, “GOOD GUYS IN HEAD START” has been a growing program in Boston’s 25 Head Start centers operated by the Action for Boston Community Development agency (ABCD). Funded by the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families (ACYF), Good Guys aims to enhance the presence of fathers in the programs and to strengthen father-child ties. As the agency began strategizing how to get fathers and other males involved, it conducted a survey. The men connected to the programs were asked what they would like to see offered. One answer, perhaps not surprisingly, was sports activities. As a result, the first city-wide basketball tournament was organized. Four hundred people attended, and 200 were Head Start parents. The numbers have tripled in subsequent years. The third year, soccer was added to reach a more diverse population, including Haitian, Brazilian, and Portuguese men.

While the tournaments have been very popular and succeeded in bringing males to the Good Guys program and events, there was a need to go one step further to deepen fathers’ involvement in their children’s education. Good Guys is shifting directions in 2004. Michael Rivera, Program Director of the Parker Hill-Fenway Head Start center and Co-Chair of the city-wide ABCD Good Guys explains, “This year, Good Guys decided to re-focus its activities on dads spending time with their children.” So the 2004 event in June will be Dad’s Day. It will be a family event, including developmentally appropriate fun parent-child activities, such as arts and crafts and a potato sack race.

Spread across the city, Good Guys ensures that local voices are heard. Each

available to all Head Start and Early Head Start families, and nearly one third of the families have joined. The goals of the Museum collaboration are:

- To encourage fathers to participate



Basketball tournaments have been popular with dads in the Good Guys program.

Head Start center has a representative to the city-wide ABCD Good Guys. A unique feature of the fatherhood program is fostering the adult male-child relationship, including males who are not the biological fathers, such as boyfriends of the mothers or significant male role models.

Collaboration Comes in Many Forms

Good Guys has drawn upon the many cultural resources in the Boston area to promote father involvement. An early collaboration was forged with the Children’s Museum which offers a Valentine’s Day with Dads and a special Father’s Day event. Free membership is

in their children’s learning

- To expose parents and children to science, math, drama, and creative activities
- To empower males, other parents, guardians, and staff through activities, workshops, and presentations
- To promote cultural and educational diversity

Another exciting collaboration is with the Wheelock College Family Theater. Head Start families receive discounted tickets and are encouraged to attend the very family-friendly productions. The goals are to introduce children to live stage performances and to promote learning through artistic expression.

With other community partners,

A VARIETY OF APPROACHES

Good Guys has provided other events oriented toward men. Financial economic empowerment training was co-sponsored by Fleet Bank and ABCD; a workshop, Tips for Toys for Your Children, a men's Health conference, and breakfast forums have involved local health and higher education institutions. In addition, ABCD administers a Career and Life United in Boston (CLUB) program for fathers. CLUB uses a peer support model to help African-American and Hispanic men ages 17-25 increase their education level and skills, obtain employment, reduce involvement in the criminal justice system, and improve family support.

Read-to-Your-Child Campaign

Good Guys is committed to supporting children's early literacy development and family literacy. Every year, ABCD sponsors a book reading event from October–May. Boston Read, a local organization, provides children's books for the campaign. Mothers and fathers are encouraged to read to their young children at home and in the Head Start classrooms. The family earns points for their efforts; in fact, more points are awarded for a male reading to a male child. The city-wide Education Coordinator, a man, also plans workshops targeting dads for involvement in the campaign. ABCD estimates that last year, over 10,000 books were read by 600 parents. Participants were honored at the Parents' Award Banquet and prizes

were given to the families that read the most books.

Many of the dads in Good Guys have participated enthusiastically in the reading campaign. One father says, "I am really enjoying my son's progress. He

Photo by A. Oliveira. ABCD HSEHS.



The Children's Museum plans special events for the Good Guys and their families.

can't wait to get up in the morning and come to Head Start. If I could, I would keep him in Head Start for the rest of his schooling!" These views, echoed by many, suggest that these dads know the value of being involved in their children's lives and educational experiences.

Early Head Start Fatherhood Demonstration

ABCD began administering its Early Head Start (EHS) program in 1998 and offers both center-based and home-based slots for infants and toddlers. ABCD applied for the fatherhood demonstration grant in collaboration with Boston Partners to Strengthen Fathers and Families, a group of local agencies. The overall goal of the collaboration was to "promote systemic change by opening up larger social service systems not accessi-

ble to fathers and families in need."

ABCD's approach to the fatherhood demonstration was to promote honest relationships between the staff and the EHS parents. By doing this, staff would be better able to understand fathers' needs and identify ways to help fathers meet their goals. A necessary step was staff training and development to create a more father-friendly environment within Early Head Start and to help staff members understand the important role that fathers play in their children's development. Training sessions encouraged staff members to reflect on their personal beliefs about men, teach them how to work with males to make family involvement easier, and increase their knowledge about the child support system. In addition, EHS case managers attended professional development events related to work with fathers.

The other primary focus of the demonstration project was to increase male participation in EHS activities. Although fathers had access to the full range of EHS activities, the current offerings did not fully meet their needs. Therefore, in December 2001, a father support group was started up in one center. It continues to meet once a week for an hour; often as many as 25-30 Head Start dads and other male figures from around the city attend.

Michael thinks the support group is a big success and describes it as "a place where men can have their feelings vali-

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BY BULLETIN STAFF WITH RENE RAYMOND

COMPU-DADS IN TEXAS— BUILDING COMPUTERS AND FATHER INVOLVEMENT

THE COMMUNITY ACTION CORPORATION OF SOUTH TEXAS EARLY HEAD START (CACOST EHS) program began its Compu-Dad project with very specific goals in mind. CACOST wanted to target non-custodial fathers who had little involvement with their infants and toddlers and help the dads make money that would go directly to child support payments. Another goal was to increase the fathers' involvement in their children's lives. At the same time, the project would fulfill a need in the community by training the fathers in marketable, cutting-edge computer technology.

It sounds almost too good to be true. In fact, Fatherhood Coordinator and single father Rene Raymond, when first pitching the program to young fathers who were still in high school, reports that was the first response to the program—the fathers wondered, “What’s the catch?” “No catch,” Rene assured them.

Features of the Compu-Dad Project

The project targeted 20 biological fathers with “fragile-family” characteristics, meaning they were unwed, noncustodial, low-income, unskilled, and young. Rene describes the fathers, “Our youngest dad was 14; the average age of dads was 21; the oldest was 35. They had very low incomes, averaging \$13,500. Most had full-time jobs. Two had white-collar jobs. Some were in school.”

Compu-Dad targeted non-custodial dads because many other programs target custodial parents and also because the first three years are critical to a child's healthy development. “This is the best time to bring dad back into the

the fathers' earnings went toward child support payments as arranged through a partnership with the Attorney General.



Photo by R. Raymond. CACOST HS/EHS.

Compu-Dad trained the fathers in marketable skills.

family picture,” Rene believes.

The program kicked off in 2002, when the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs donated 19 used, complete computer systems to Compu-Dad. The fathers rebuilt the computers and purchased and installed new parts and software to create state-of-the-art machines.

The three counties served by the agency, which is located in Alice, Texas, are predominantly rural and home to many low-income families. Rene explains that when Compu-Dad was created, many families could not afford to buy new computers. The technology divide was widening. Through Compu-Dad, “We were able to address a need in our community and provide affordable computers to more people,” says Rene. All

Dads were learning marketable skills and contributing to their financial responsibility in raising a child.

CACOST found community support for the Compu-Dad project. The agency partnered with local high schools to ensure that fathers received credit for participation in the program. Training to learn the skills necessary to perform this technological work was provided (at no cost to the fathers) at the Coastal Bend College's extension campus in Alice. The fathers had the classes to themselves. This arrangement ensured that the fathers would be comfortable and bond as a group.

CACOST created business cards for each of the fathers. Additionally, CACOST set up a lab/work space in its building so that the fathers could come

BUILDING COMPUTERS AND FATHER INVOLVEMENT

in anytime to work. If they wanted to pursue any of their own business enterprises, they had free access to computers, a fax machine, telephone, and other office equipment. Nearly half of the dads have gotten additional work through referrals.

Increasing Father Involvement

Another important component of the Compu-Dad project was increasing the fathers' involvement in their children's lives. Dads were encouraged to volunteer in the centers and to be present during home visits. They attended EHS activities, such as orientation, open house, fundraising, and field trips with the children. One father in the project sat on the EHS Advisory Committee.

CACOST coordinated a variety of family activities which were fun and game-like. The dads in the Compu-Dad program and the mothers worked together as a team to win points and at the end, the winning family received a prize. In the process of having fun, the parents were improving their communication skills. The activities also were a delight for the children, who enjoyed seeing their parents working together. The agency also conducted other activities that appealed to the fathers, such as a Christmas holiday celebration, workshops on such topics as communication skills for moms and dads, and the annual Breakfast with Dad.

Dads in the program participated in bi-monthly sessions facilitated by Rene



Photo by R. Raymond. CACOST HS/EHS.

Dads participated in fun family events.

using the *21st Century Exploring Parenting* curriculum. A variety of discussion topics were chosen by the dads, such as finances and early childhood development. They scheduled the sessions at times convenient for them, often on weekends or evenings.

Successes of Compu-Dad

The computer training has been a success. Fathers have learned the skills necessary to refurbish computers, as well as the skills to do some of their own computer repair and troubleshooting on the side. One positive outcome of Compu-Dad is that CACOST hired one of the fathers as a computer technician after he earned an Associate's degree in computer technology.

Most of the Compu-Dads had little or no involvement in their children's lives initially. However, because of the support

they received from the program, many have developed relationships and have become connected to their children. One non-residential father in the first year of the program, Rene recalls, did not like to pick up or hold his daughter. "Why?" Rene asked. "Because she shows no affection for me most of the time," the father said. Rene explained to the father that becoming a part of a child's life requires time. "You have to work on it and be patient," he advised. By the second year of Compu-Dad, the father had a very different attitude. He spent more and more time with his daughter, and at the end of his custodial weekend, he was sad to say good-bye and return her to her mother's home. He and his daughter had established a close, loving relationship.

The program has made a difference for the mothers as well. Rene reports that although many mothers doubted

that the dads would be interested in getting more involved in their children's lives, they were pleasantly surprised. They saw a difference in the fathers; many fathers did become more active and were willing to work with the mothers in order to contribute to their child's positive development.

As a result of the Compu-Dad project, Rene believes that staff members have gained a better understanding of the importance of the role fathers play in the lives of their children. The

ment program for children entering the school system.

To measure success, CACOST developed a fatherhood profile. When fathers began the program, they completed a fatherhood profile that measured four dimensions, including involvement, consistency, awareness, and nurturance. The fathers scored their responses and determined if they were low in any of the areas. Initially, most dads had average scores. Each dad created a one year plan to improve. Their scores increased after a

did not expect that young EHS fathers would have parents that would influence their lives. These parents, he speculates, wanted their sons to use their time outside of school to work and make money, not to attend classes. Happily, after discussions, many of the parents who objected became supportive.

When Compu-Dad started, there were only one or two computer repair facilities in the area. However, the market has become very competitive. Also, new computers have become more affordable, and buyers are less likely to want to repair or purchase used ones. Therefore, the fathers' skills are not in as much demand as they were three years ago.

What does the future hold?

Compu-Dad ended in January 2004. CACOST plans to continue working with the community college to offer free computer classes through the end of the current school year. The agency also is considering initiating new projects that will continue to involve fathers while addressing the employment and business needs of the community. ■

Written by *Bulletin* staff based on interviews with Rene Raymond and review of program materials.

Rene Raymond is Parent Involvement Specialist at CACOST in Alice, TX.

T: 361-664-5515;

E: rene.raymond@cacost.org.



Photo by R. Raymond. CACOST HS/EHS.

There were many success stories in the Compu-Dad EHS project.

center is now more "father-friendly" and displays posters that show fathers in a positive light.

Ideally, after a child leaves EHS, other programs should continue to facilitate and encourage father involvement. The public schools in Alice, Texas, are in the early stages of a father involve-

ment program for children entering the school system.

Challenges

One of the biggest unanticipated challenges and a surprise for Rene was the initial lack of support from roughly half of the young fathers' parents. CACOST

BY BULLETIN STAFF WITH CRAIG HART AND LEREEN CASTELLANO

FAMILY STAR MONTESSORI— WHERE THE FATHERS BUILD IT AND THE FATHERS COME

WALKING INTO THE FAMILY STAR MONTESSORI EARLY HEAD START (EHS) center, a visitor notices large poster-sized photos of fathers snuggling with their babies, a book corner devoted to men being fathers, and several men seated in the lounge area, chatting away as if they have been here before. The fathers in the photos and the men talking represent some of the 75 families enrolled in the Early Head Start program. No mistaking it, a father-friendly environment is what this is. Has it always been like this at Family Star? No, father involvement has evolved and along the way, it has transformed the organization, its staff, and the lives of many families. Family Star is a national model for developing and maintaining a cutting-edge fatherhood program.

The Beginnings

Located in northwest Denver, Family Star Early Head Start was launched in 1995, six years after the agency began. The program for infants and toddlers provides a dual language Montessori educational approach. (Hudgens et al. 2002). When there was an opportunity to become one of 21 EHS fatherhood demonstration projects, the Executive Director of Family Star, Lereen Castellano, states that they “aggressively pursued this funding opportunity to learn how to work with fathers in the Latin community. It is essential that we foster and nurture our relationships with fathers so we can effectively support the entire family.”

When the three-year demonstration grant was awarded in 2001, Craig Hart became the Director of the Fatherhood Project. Well-known in the community and a founder and the first administrator of the Head Start program, Craig was an easy choice. According to Lereen: “His

Photo by T. Freeman, Family Star Montessori EHS.



The fathers took leadership and ensured that the fatherhood project would succeed.

capacity to love others is what drew us.” There was no doubt he could relate to the young men the program wanted to reach. And Craig himself seized this opportunity to learn more about “how to be a better father and grandfather.” The organization’s needs and Craig’s personal journey meshed.

From the beginning, Craig took an asset-based approach. “We look at Dads as a major untapped resource. We knew they had strengths.” Instead of starting off with a needs assessment that would highlight their deficits that needed “fixing,” Craig hung out on the front steps of the center, with a supply of donuts

and coffee, ready to talk with men about this new initiative. Building trust and gaining their confidence, Craig was able to move forward.

In July 2001, a visioning session was held with 15 fathers and father figures, program staff, and other community members. Craig asked the group, “What can we do to build a great fatherhood project over the next three years?” They jotted their ideas on post-its and placed them on a large board in their meeting room. Two key principles emerged that continue to guide the project:

- Taking ownership and accountability of the project. The fathers said they wanted to take leadership and ensure that the project would succeed.
- Achieving greater intimacy with their children. The fathers wanted to become more involved in their children’s lives and in the Family Star community.

All other ideas have since flowed from these first two principles. The group established major categories that called for action (see side box). These action areas continue to guide the fatherhood project. The original post-its are still up on the board, along with some new ones, as the vision has expanded.

Three months later, in the fall of 2001, *El Concilio* (The Council) was born. It functions as a “Board of Directors” for the project and includes nine fathers or father figures from Early Head Start, one of whom is the chair. Eight other fathers from the Denver

area, representing the mental health field, media, government, and the Office of Child Support Enforcement serve on *El Concilio*. Meeting monthly, *El Concilio* generates activities and decides the direction of the project. Within Family Star, it operates at the same level as advisory councils for family services and health services.

Steps Taken—Building Personal Relationships

As the first post-its on the board indicated, building stronger personal relationships in the fathers' lives is central to the vision of the project. Among the project activities that help fathers achieve this goal are

- **Co-parenting classes.** A majority of the fathers do not live with their children but in these seminars, the moms and the dads learn how to problem-solve and work together with the child's best interest in mind.
- **SuperDads** fatherhood development training course. Originally intended for fathers of preschoolers, Family Star has adapted the curriculum to

Photo by T. Freeman. Family Star Montessori EHS.



The fathers became more involved in their children's lives and in the Family Star community.

fathers of infants to 3 year olds.

Seven fathers who have finished this 14-week program are now facilitators. Moms, too, wanted a course like this; with the support of the fatherhood project, Family Star created a *SuperMoms* course. Several moms are now facilitators.

- **Special out-reach to live-away dads.** A staff person is assigned to non-resident dads to involve them in home visits, parent-teacher conferences, and family night activities.

Craig sums up the impact of the *SuperDads* course by recalling how one father has learned to tell his children, "I love you." This dad is now working on expressing his love to his own father. Other examples are plentiful of how fathers and their children are forming enduring, loving relationships and becoming more active in Family Star.

Early on, it was clear that father-staff relationships needed to be strengthened. In August 2001, one day of a week-long annual staff training was devoted to

father involvement and included the sharing of personal experiences and a panel discussion with Family Star fathers. At that time, staff remarked how helpful it was to hear the perspective of fathers in the program. Now the pre-service training related to the fatherhood program has expanded to two days. Building on the staff's desire to learn more about fatherhood and dads, LUNCH AND LEARN seminars are held every month on relevant topics, such as men and relationships and men and depression. Craig emphasizes how important it is to keep the male perspective "on the front of the minds of staff" and to provide ongoing learning especially for new staff.

Coaching—rather than case management—is another way that relationships have been forged between the fatherhood project staff and the men involved in EHS. Craig acknowledges that most males do not like to admit they need help or are hurting emotionally. But once trust is established, and the fathers or father figures open up, Craig and his staff provide one-on-one coaching and address the men's needs on an individual basis. As time consuming as this approach is, coaching often represents the first healthy relationship that a dad has with another male.

Steps Taken—Building Organizational Relationships

After the second year of the Fatherhood Project, it was time to revisit the earlier vision. Back to writing post-its and mounting them on the board in the con-

Family STAR Calls for Action!

- * celebrating fatherhood
- * maintaining a partnership with the Family Star staff
- * telling stories that connect the past to the future
- * building in a support system for fathers
- * male bonding
- * reuniting families in marital relationships
- * building a better future with jobs and training
- * providing role models and mentors

WHERE THE FATHERS BUILD IT AND THE FATHERS COME

ference room. Based on the success of the *SuperDads* workshops, the dads decided they wanted to expand father involvement throughout the city of Denver. In the absence of an overarching city-wide project, the dads wanted to create one. Referred to as The Fatherhood and Families Collaborative, coordination is now underway with nine different agencies to provide technical assistance to fatherhood projects, conduct training in fatherhood development, and engage in grass-roots fatherhood research. In October, 2004, through a partnership with Red Rock Community College, the Collaborative will offer training that will lead to a professional certificate for fatherhood practioners. In addition, the Fatherhood Project has provided outreach to other local Head Start programs that want to replicate father involvement efforts.

To provide space for all future fatherhood activities and The Collaborative, plans are being made to renovate 6,000 square feet of vacant space in the Family Star EHS center. Adhering to their guiding principles, the dads have taken leadership in the design and emphasized how the space should nurture positive relationships. According to Craig, "The fathers wanted a non-bureaucratic space; they wanted dads and families to actually experience what it is to be a 'dad.'" Included in their plans are an artist's studio for fathers and children to use together and a tree house that projects through the roof offering a view of the Denver skyline and the

night sky. They also want to expand the services of Family Star by adding 4-5 classrooms for preschoolers. Fund raising for the expansion project is scheduled to begin on Mother's Day, 2004.

The dads have designed a new space for a city-wide fathers collaborative. Their priority is that the space nurture positive relationships.

Not surprisingly, the vision of the new space has forged stronger relationships between other institutions and the agency. The School of Architecture at the University of Denver is providing expert design skills; the contractor will do sweat equity with the fathers, who will provide the labor. Craig sums up the agency's ambitious plans, spurred by the dads, in this way, "The fathers will build it and the fathers will come."

What Has Changed?

The Executive Director credits Craig and the fatherhood project with bringing about a paradigm shift for the organization. New ways of thinking are reflected in the language used around the agency. Lereen explains, "Instead of talking about serving fathers, we talk about partnering with fathers." Administrators, classroom

staff, and support staff look at fathers differently—they embrace qualities of partnership and value fathers' strengths.

In the late 1940s, Maria Montessori recommended that a child's first bath be given by the father. Whereas the mother represented basic nurturing and the security of the home, the father represented a link to the external world. With his strong hands supporting the baby in the bath, he would impart a different experience, hopefully inspiring a sense of confidence and security to the newborn. It is not surprising that the posters in the entrance to Family Star Early Head Start show fathers holding their babies, intimately joined, safe and secure in their relationship. Maria Montessori would be proud of the fathers and what they have achieved. ■

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Written by *Bulletin* staff based on interviews with Craig Hart and Lereen Castellanos and review of program materials.

Craig Hart is Director of the Fatherhood Project at Family Star Montessori EHS in Denver, CO. T: 303-477-7827; E: craig@familystar.net; Lereen Castellano is Executive Director, Family Star Montessori EHS in Denver, CO. T: 303-477-7827; E: lereen@familystar.net.

BY BULLETIN STAFF WITH WITH MARVIN HOGAN, RON COLLINS, AND ERIC BROWN

FRIENDS OF CHILDREN OF MISSISSIPPI, INC.— A MALE INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

“TWENTY YEARS AGO, WE WERE CARRYING OUT AN INITIATIVE, but didn’t know it was called male or fatherhood involvement...” says Marvin Hogan, Executive Director of Friends of Children of Mississippi Inc., as he describes the early efforts of the grantee Head Start agency to reach out to men—including youth, fathers, uncles, and grandfathers. In 1984, when the agency took stock, it discovered that most of the Head Start households (86%) were headed by single females. Not surprisingly, it was primarily the mothers who were involved in the Head Start activities. Staff members were concerned about the lack of male figures in the children’s lives and the Head Start program.

Photo courtesy of M. Hogan, Friends of Children of Mississippi HS.



The agency partners with church leaders in the community.

How to Get Started

The best way to reach Head Start fathers, according to Marvin, “is to establish a very positive relationship with them and show genuine interest in them as individuals.” That means being concerned about all aspects of their well-being, their economic status, and their relationship with the Head Start community. Marvin recalls that early on, the agency’s concern was translated into action when it set up the Friends Youth Corp for 15-25 year olds. Participants included local gang members. The youth were provided with mentoring, counseling and a variety of workshops to improve their literacy, self-esteem, and employment skills. The agency also secured summer jobs for some of the youth. They were responsible for maintaining and supervising baseball and softball fields. Their job performance was celebrated by local authorities as an outstanding contribution to the town. They earned the respect of the police and

community who gave them an award for their work.

Over the years, Friends of Children of Mississippi, located in Jackson, has expanded from serving four counties and 1,300 children in central Mississippi to 15 counties and 3,522 children. The agency’s programs are diverse, including Early Head Start, job training and economic development, and partnerships with health providers, local school districts, and clergy. Friends of Children of Mississippi supports the development of the community, the family, and the individual.

Many of the 35 Head Start centers offer fatherhood/male programs. Although each program differs in some respects, Marvin articulates common principles that underlie the agency’s male involvement efforts:

- Establish a positive relationship with the customer

(parents/fathers/males).

- Only promise what you can deliver. Tell the truth.
- Act now, do not simply study the problem. Make decisions and move forward.
- Listen to the parents/fathers/males. Give them opportunities to speak.
- Remain open to new ideas and approaches
- Stay humble. Admit you are human and make mistakes. Apologize when necessary and move on.

Effective Methods

Ron Collins, the agency’s Coordinator of Male Involvement Activities since July, 2000, notes that most Friends of Children programs hold monthly sessions for fathers and father figures. They get together on weekday evenings or Saturday mornings. An involved father of a three-year-old, Eric Brown praises the method his daughter’s Head Start program uses to encourage father participation: “Messages are left on my answering machine, notes are sent home with my child. Saying we’re not invited is an excuse that men have often used. But the program has eliminated that excuse. I know I’m welcome.”

The monthly sessions for fathers often feature a half-hour presentation of general information on relevant topics, such as how to access health resources or government services. Guest speakers or agency staff are invited to present. After time set aside for socializing, some cen-

FRIENDS OF CHILDREN OF MISSISSIPPI, INC.

ters offer activities involving children. One popular program was a Reading is Fundamental (RIF) Book Fair. Staff asked each involved father to recruit two others for literacy activities. The male involvement programs plan other adult-child activities, such as Breakfast with Dad, knowing how much children want their dads to be involved. The agency has created a Wall of Fame to display the photos of the dads who have been active in the male activities for five months or more.

Competition, Compassion and Coaching

Competition sometimes spurs involvement in the fatherhood program. Recently, the agency offered a special reward to the center with the highest attendance in male involvement programs. The agency chartered a bus to take dads from the winning center to a pro football game in New Orleans. Eric Brown observes that the trip was a great opportunity for fathers to bond.

It can be difficult to overcome some fathers' initial reluctance to get involved in their children's lives. According to Marvin, some Head Start fathers ask, "Why should I get involved when my own father wasn't in my life?" He replies, "Do you want your child to say the same thing about you that you say about your dad?" Ron notes how important it is to assist each father in understanding that his relationship with his own dad affects how he relates to his children. Thinking back to childhood pain may be enough to motivate some Head

Start dads to improve relationships with their children. But because every father is different, many other strategies are employed as well.

One strategy that promotes involvement is to ask parents to sign a non-binding "Compassionate Partnership" pledge that they will spend one and a half hours a

Some Head Start fathers ask, "Why should I get involved when my own father wasn't in my life?"

week involved in an activity at the center or at home with their children. Children observe their parents signing and staff read them their parents' pledge. Marvin explains that involving the children is "good psychology" because if parents fail to keep their pledge, children will ask them why. Ron is quick to point out to a father how happy his child is when the dad visits his child's class. Marvin and Ron note that making these seemingly small connections between a father's behavior and his child's response is very important.

The next step the agency takes is mentoring and coaching fathers, including teaching them how to get involved in various activities with their children of all ages. For older children, dads are given guidance about coaching sports and helping with schoolwork.

Ron recalls that he did not think his

job was going to be easy. Recruiting fathers was a challenge because they often perceive that Head Start is female "turf." The predominantly female staff members sometimes feel uncomfortable approaching fathers. Staff training has been essential to the success of the male involvement program. The training has encouraged the Head Start staff to make their programs more father-friendly by inviting men into the classrooms. Centers are also required to conduct a self-assessment to determine whether their operation is father-friendly.

Being a Role Model

Ron also believes that it is important to have trusted community members participate in the male involvement program, particularly grandparents. He explains that grandparents are interested because, "They may have fallen short in the past. Some feel it is time to redeem themselves. They can be great role models."

The success of the male involvement initiative depends heavily on the style of its leaders. The fact that Marvin and Ron are both fathers themselves and have charismatic personalities has helped their male involvement program succeed. They are great story tellers and are open about sharing their personal experiences.

Marvin talks with Head Start dads about his experiences both as a son and as a father. "It was difficult for me to recall anytime my father displayed affection. But he was always there." Ron can understand

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BY CAROLINA ALVAREZ WITH ROB GOSLIN

RED CLIFF BAND— AN INNOVATIVE FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE

Launching the Project

“Each family has their own way of doing things, and staff has to respect that. Since no parent- child bond is the same, it is important to respect families and recognize their individuality,” says Rob Goslin, a tribal historian and spiritual leader of the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa (Ojibwe) Indians. Their reservation is located on 11,000 acres of Lake Superior shoreline at the northernmost tip of Wisconsin.

As someone committed to community building and wellness, Rob was a likely choice for becoming Director of the fatherhood demonstration program in the Red Cliff Early Head Start program. Referred to as the *Fatherhood Initiative*, this project focused on staff training in a parent curriculum and partnering with other agencies for service delivery.

Touchpoints

Before Rob’s involvement in the Red Cliff project, he attended comprehensive training on the Touchpoints model, an approach developed by the Brazelton Touchpoints Center in Boston to build healthy families through enhanced relationships between parents and providers. “Touchpoints encourages professionals to focus on the strengths of family members rather than their deficits,” according to Rob. His familiarity with and respect for the Touchpoints model and the fact that Touchpoints parallels Red Cliff values and culture affected the decision of the planning committee to choose this

curriculum model for the demonstration fatherhood project.

Touchpoints can be implemented in any setting where the staff works with

Photo by K. Goodlet, Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa HSEHS.



Fathers participated in weekly pow-wows that included drumming, singing, and dancing with their children.

children. It gives professionals effective and proven tools to support infants and parents at the beginning of their lives together and continuing through the early years.

The planning group for the Fatherhood Initiative, with Rob at the head, decided to implement Touchpoints by providing 16 hours of training to 3 target groups: Early Childhood Center staff, Community Health Center staff, and other tribal service providers, including the Bayfield County Birth to Three Program. Over the course of three years, the Fatherhood Initiative has trained 80 service providers to use the Touchpoints model. Rob notes, “One of the most important parts of implementing the Touchpoints curriculum was that it

required collaboration with other agencies in order to provide continuity of care to our EHS/HS families.”

The entire EHS staff was trained in the Touchpoints curriculum, which stressed looking at the family as a whole, establishing a relationship with parents, involving both parents in the child’s life, and observing how the parents’ relationship with their child affects the child’s development and reactions to situations in the environment. The staff also was trained to trust fathers, and “encouraged to engage in self-introspection and to value parents and their culture,” says Rob.

The solid framework that developed as a result of this careful planning and collaboration strengthened other initiatives to support families.

Innovative Father Involvement Strategies

“When we started this project, father involvement in the Early Head Start and Head Start programs was minimal to non-existent,” Rob states. “The program did not even include fathers in the initial enrollment process.” He further explains, “Fathers have felt excluded since the beginning; it seemed like the staff was only interested in working with the child and the mother.”

The first step Rob took to address this problem was to include a father assessment in the enrollment packet. The assessment enabled program staff to identify fathers’ strengths and needs. Mothers were happy that the fathers

RED CLIFF BAND

started to get involved.

Rob emphasizes the importance of offering fathers the opportunity to participate in interesting activities that were father-friendly. “When organizing activities for fathers, we need to be creative. We had to go beyond our traditional role when working with dads.” Involving the Red Cliff fathers was done in a variety of ways. The project designed father- oriented activities that were sometimes only for fathers, others that included fathers and their children, and some that involved the family.

Fathers only

One of the first steps Rob took was to invite interested fathers to visit the recreation center and the gym weekly. Here, fathers developed relationships with one another. This was a critical step in building trust and willingness to participate further.

These activities offered the opportunity for fathers to talk with other fathers without other family members present. This also provided time to reflect about the *Four Hills of Life*. For Red Cliff Indians, this term refers to the four stages of growth: infancy, teenage years, adult, and elder years. Fathers discussed the stages with one another and what each stage meant to them personally.

Fathers with children

To engage their children, fathers participated in weekly pow-wows at the center teaching boys how to use the drum and

Photo by L. Goslin. Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa HSEHS.



Rob Goslin, Director of the Red Cliff EHS Fatherhood Initiative.

girls how to dance. These activities helped develop father-child bonds, taught children how to follow rules and take turns, and developed children’s pre-literacy skills.

During the pow-wows, fathers encouraged children to stimulate their vocal cords by singing. By emulating all the sounds and words that the adults used, the children enlarged their English and native language vocabulary. The pow-wow also promoted the customs and values of the tribe, such as respect and generosity.

Rob notes, “No matter what issues the fathers have, they are always loving fathers.” He offered them the chance to demonstrate this affection through an activity called *Sharing Their Children*. Fathers sat in a circle with their children and talked about their unique father-child relationships, how they had developed these close bonds, and what they valued most about these ties.

Fathers and families

Pizza nights offered opportunities for families to socialize in a friendly setting and to enjoy meeting one another.

Results

As a result of the Fatherhood Initiative, those who participated in the Touchpoints training now have a better understanding of the stages of growth and development in children birth to three years of age. The training also offered parents and providers the tools to work through challenging stages of a young child’s life and to promote optimal child and family development. The project also provided consistent guidance and support to families through the tribal health care and social service system as added benefits for families participating in the Red Cliff demonstration project.

The successful Red Cliff father involvement initiative led to stronger families and enthusiastic father involvement. By offering activities that were culturally relevant and sensitive to individual and family needs, the project gained the trust of participating fathers. This project is a model for programs planning father-friendly and culturally appropriate activities for fathers while sharing important information about early childhood and offering support for families. ■

Carolina Alvarez is a Head Start Fellow.
T: 202-205- 8602; E: calvarez@acf.hhs.gov.

Rob Goslin is the Director of the Fatherhood Initiatives at Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewas.

T: 715-779-3938

E: redcliff_fatherhood@yahoo.com

BY TOMÁS REYES

A CARIBBEAN EXPERIENCE— PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND *THE 21ST CENTURY EXPLORING PARENTING PROGRAM*

OCCASIONALLY, BOTH RESEARCH-BASED AND COMMON-SENSE knowledge appear to dance together in support of an initiative, an idea, or a dream. Such, I believe, is the case of parent involvement and the male parent movement. Parenting is one of the hardest fulltime jobs, and many families need support in parenting. Fathers may need support tailored to meet their own needs—different from support for mothers.

The Municipality of Mayaguez Head Start Program and the Seasonal Head Start Program (both located in Puerto Rico) recognized that their parents, including the dads, needed support. The programs decided to implement *The 21st Century Exploring Parenting* (EP21) curriculum on a trial basis. Developed by the Head Start Bureau, the curriculum offers parents guidance to support positive parent/child interactions and to build their confidence as their child's first and most important teacher.

I became involved as a trainer and process consultant in their efforts to implement EP21. Both programs have contributed a unique perspective to the challenge of implementing this parent education program in the Caribbean.

The Mayaguez Training and Implementation Workshop

Over a three and a half day period in December 2003, 30 staff members of the Mayaguez Head Start were trained to be facilitators and parent trainers. Using a Spanish version of EP21, family service workers, social service staff, home visitors, and others worked as a team to develop their skills.

At the same time, the management

Photo by D. Rodriguez, Diocese of Mayaguez HS.



Head Start staff and parents were introduced to EP21.

team planned how best to support a trial implementation of EP21 in the centers. They developed these four guidelines for implementation of the parenting curriculum:

- Ensure that participant-trainees develop effective training strategies
- Create training teams
- Determine the number of participating parents
- Find ways to make existing program procedures more flexible to better serve parents

As a result of these discussions, a technical assistance module was added to the curriculum to support the trials. The module included the following tasks for local programs:

- Develop strategies to ensure final approval of an implementation plan
- Provide criteria for decision-making and evaluation
- Initiate task-oriented processes

- Establish timelines
- Plan evaluation strategies

During the workshop, facilitator trainees were assembled into teams based on their observed strengths and need for improvement. For example, introverts who were detail and task-oriented were paired with strong, outgoing extroverts. The learning experience for both the staff and the management team was designed to build competencies and effective working relationships.

Special Parent Training Initiative in Mayaguez

The enthusiastic workshop participants suggested conducting an immediate follow-up session to reach parents. A few weeks after the workshop, 300 hundred parents, grandparents, and personnel met in Mayaguez for a special session. Program personnel wrote letters to employers and took other steps to make it possible for employed parents to attend.

The half-day session, which was followed by an afternoon social, presented parenting as an enterprise in which both mother and father can view themselves as associates. Presenters provided information about EP21 and emphasized these points:

- The parent is the principal educator.
- Males need to be integrated into parenting.

Significantly, a large group of males assisted and contributed substantially to the session. Although the average age

A CARIBBEAN EXPERIENCE—PARENT INVOLVEMENT

was approximately 32 years old, there were grandfathers as well.

Male participants expressed a marked interest in what they called “real participation” in their children’s learning and development. They wanted to become more involved and engaged. Fathers cited mowing grass and painting Head Start centers as normal expectations for men but expressed a strong interest in playing a more important role in family life.

Responding to a question on a survey about future trainings, one father wrote, “I will keep participating in these workshops, to continue forming myself as a person.” Other participants made suggestions about how programs could improve parent involvement, such as “Create more opportunities for parents, including the men, to share with their children.” The positive feedback from this session provided further impetus for Mayaguez Head Start to implement EP21 to reach more parents.

The Seasonal Head Start Training and Implementation Workshop

The Seasonal Head Start Program also conducted an implementation training workshop over a three day period similar to Mayaguez. But the Seasonal program differs in some important ways that were reflected in the implementation workshop:

- The Seasonal program is newly established and a smaller organization. Almost all personnel in the program participated in the implementation workshop.

- The seasonal and migrant families have needs relevant to their unique situation, such as their constant change of residence and temporal employment. Though there are no

Fathers cited mowing grass and painting Head Start centers as normal expectations for men and express a strong interest in playing a more important role in family life.

marked seasonal changes in Puerto Rico, work for the rural sector is often temporary and infrequent. The on-and-off employment experience in the rural areas is so prevalent that it has been named “chiripeo,” a social phenomena meaning “doing bits and all.” In important ways, this population differs from the coastal and urban families served in Mayaguez Head Start.

- The management team of the Seasonal Program was very involved in the implementation training initiative. They made rapid decisions producing immediate support for successful implementation. They expected the

entire staff to participate as trainees, facilitators, and support staff during implementation.

The Seasonal implementation workshop trained 25 staff members as facilitators. It was expected that all of the communities and families would receive the EP21 training.

Outcomes of the Training Experience

Staff from the Mayaguez and Seasonal Head Starts who participated in the implementation workshops voiced enthusiasm about *The 21st Century Exploring Parenting Program*. As they developed understanding and ownership of the material, their attitudes about parent involvement evolved. Through practice, their facilitation skills improved. Some participants stated that they learned new methods for working with fathers through training. One commented: “I learned strategies to work with parents, suggestions for facilitators, and how to identify the groups to work with.” Another said, “I will utilize training to better integrate with parents and obtain positive results with them.” Importantly, the management teams expressed commitment to future training events. They developed strategies for training and strengthened communication within the programs.

Implementation Is Going Ahead

Five Mayaguez centers were selected by the management team to participate in

Photo by D. Rodriguez, Diocese of Mayaguez HS.



Workshop participants learned new strategies for training and communicating with parents.

the trial implementation, beginning in April 2004. Selection criteria included the availability of facilities to use as training centers, the relationships between the selected communities, and available funds. One member of the management team was appointed to facilitate and support the trainers and to serve as a liaison to higher management. A sample of 24 parents in one community was selected for the trial effort. These parents were delighted to participate.

After an initial presentation for selected parents and staff, the management team planned training strategies. They agreed to negotiate training dates, resources, child care, and other matters that would affect attendance. They acknowledged the need to develop creative approaches to distribute work and handle organizational

Head Start managers have learned that the planning process includes brainstorming ways to improve program procedures to support parent involvement.

procedures. For example, they offered to address the needs of parents by adapting training hours to parents' schedules and holding meetings after regular work hours.

After the implementation workshop was conducted for the Seasonal Program, the management team initiated a planning and preparation phase, targeting three centers in three communities. They planned an introduction activity for all the parents and a recruitment marathon to interest fathers. The implementation phase is in the early stages.

Lessons Learned

Based on their experiences in the training workshops, management in both the Mayaguez and Seasonal Head Starts have learned that the planning process should:

- 1) Consider particular program needs and realities (i.e., budget and demographics)
- 2) Brainstorm ways to improve

program procedures and structures to support the new effort

- 3) Include technical assistance to promote work planning
- 4) Design post-training activities with parents
- 5) Target, recruit, and induct male parents
- 6) Expand the role of fathers in children's lives

Head Start has always been in the forefront of early childhood initiatives and parent involvement. I believe that stressing the importance of father involvement in the learning and development of children is one of Head Start's most worthwhile priorities. Happily, the implementation of EP21 in the Caribbean is generating waves of change in this diverse and complex location. ■

Tomás Reyes is a parent-education consultant based in Puerto Rico.
T: 787-764-4649; E: treyesp@prtc.net

BY WILLA C. SIEGEL, BARRY GARY, AND JACQUELINE DAVIS

LITERACY STARTS WITH THE FAMILY... AND THAT MEANS DADS TOO

THE IMPACT OF THE CONNECTION BETWEEN FAMILY LITERACY AND FATHERS is powerful. Whether dads read bedtime stories, talk about the sports page, make a grocery list, write a child's name, or explain the directions for a toy, they are presenting opportunities for their children to develop language and literacy skills. They are raising future writers and readers—and future writers and readers are future leaders (Darling 2004).

What are Family Literacy Services?

Head Start and Early Head Start programs are committed to helping parents, including fathers, contribute to their children's learning. Family literacy services are one way that programs can help parents. By focusing on the literacy of moms, dads, and their children *at the same time*, family literacy services are an effective way to help parents get involved in their children's literacy development.

Family literacy services are mandated by the Head Start Act of 1998 and identified specifically in 1304.40(e)(4)(i)&(ii) of the *Head Start Program Performance Standards*.

Elements of family literacy can be seen throughout the *Program Performance Standards* because the philosophies of Head Start and family literacy are so similar. They both recognize that the family is the child's first teacher, provide support services to families, and encourage parent involvement. Family literacy services also impact the entire range of child outcomes described in the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework, such as language development and building positive approaches to learning.



Photo by W. Donlan, Bay City EHS.

Many dads enjoy reading with their children and promoting their children's literacy development.

For the last five years, the Head Start Bureau has partnered with the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL), headquartered in Louisville, KY. The Center has provided training and technical assistance professional development and other resources to support the legislative requirements and the implementation of the Program Performance Standards pertaining to family literacy.

Family literacy services are multi-focused and inter-related. They reach out to children, parents, and staff. The services include:

- parenting education for all family members
- child development information for program staff

- parent-child activities and learning experiences
- adult education at all levels

These services may be delivered directly through a Head Start or Early Head Start program or in collaboration with community partners.

Setting Goals

A child's entrance into Head Start or Early Head Start and the accompanying family partnership agreement process provide opportunities for moms and dads to explore goals for themselves and

their children. Whether fathers are residential or not, they are meant to be included in this goal-setting process.

Many fathers (like mothers) identify goals related to being better parents. What does that mean exactly? It means different things to different fathers. Some dads might express a desire to complete their education, while others talk about wanting to find a job or a better job. Still others might wonder whether their children will have all the skills they need to succeed in school and in life. Consistently, fathers express concern for the healthy development of their children and recognize their own role in fostering development.

Reaching These Goals

To help the dads attain their goal of being better parents, program staff might link them with family literacy services, such as a parent education program. The topics covered might include the important roles fathers play in their children's development and the importance of interactive literacy activities between fathers and their children. Above all, these learning opportunities are designed to support the father-child relationship and involve fathers in their children's lives.

Program staff often motivate fathers to recognize that they can do better for their children by improving their own education and literacy through adult education. Numerous family literacy services, such as ESL (English as a Second

Language) classes and GED (General Equivalency Diploma) courses, are available to support the dads. Father involvement projects in Head Start and Early Head Start may offer job training so dads can develop marketable skills. As

Head Start programs have planned a variety of literacy-related activities to include moms and dads: creating lending libraries, visiting book stores, or providing mentors to read with children and parents.

fathers attain a higher educational level or secure better jobs, they often feel more confident about their parenting abilities too.

Supporting Dads and Children's Literacy

Programs have developed different approaches for targeting dads' involvement in children's literacy. Some Head Start and Early Head Start programs have provided formal training focused on teaching dads useful techniques for book-reading and discussion with their

young children (see pages 53-54 about Vermont Center for the Book). Others have organized on-going fathers' support groups where fathers and mentors discuss a range of issues, including involvement in children's lives and supporting their language and literacy development.

To ensure that there are no "bookless" homes in Head Start, programs have planned a variety of activities to include moms and dads, such as—

- creating lending libraries
- sponsoring library days for parents and children
- arranging trips to bookstores where parents participate in demonstrations on how to select books for their children
- sponsoring special "book reading" events for parents and children
- making audio tapes of books so that parents who cannot read can still share the reading experience with their children
- providing language and literacy mentors to read to children and work with parents on enhancing their own ability to read to their children

Family literacy services and other Head Start support services encourage dads to find what works best for them and their children. While some fathers are comfortable reading with their children, others prefer to take walks and discuss what they are seeing or doing.

LITERACY STARTS WITH THE FAMILY

Still others like to work with their children on “projects.” Everyday routines that dads and children share—such as counting the plates for a meal, wondering if the bath toys will sink or float, or

Photo by B. Wood, Wabash Area Development HSEHS



Family literacy services support the involvement of dads, moms, and children.

talking about the different colors of clothes in the laundry—also provide learning experiences. Programs also can share strategies with dads that encourage their storytelling without emphasis on the printed English word. Programs can help fathers find their own individual styles of interacting with their children and help them understand that all positive interactions are opportunities for enhancing literacy and language development. (See pages 32-34 on a Family Story Book.)

What all parents need to know, whether they are native English speakers or English language learners, whether they are strong readers or not, is that children develop their love of reading and learning early in life. Parents can inspire and motivate from birth on.

The Success is Real

Many Head Start and Early Head Start programs have successfully involved fathers in their children’s literacy experiences. They all identify the key ingredient: start with the interest expressed by the fathers in their family partnership agreements or in focus groups, surveys, and informal conversations. That is, the programs encourage fathers to identify what and how they want to learn. Then, in conjunction with the family literacy services and fatherhood efforts, the programs are able to develop options that will meet the individual needs of the fathers. By collaborating and working together, trusting relationships develop between dads and Head Start staff, and the community partners who support the family literacy services. The NCFL has been an important partner with Head Start programs.

When asked: “How has family literacy changed how you interact with your child(ren)?”, Head Start fathers have replied:

It has changed the meaning of being a father to my kids.

It has opened the door to spend more time with my children.

It was hard to read stories but now my daughter says read to me and I know that it is quality time.

We change the words to music on the radio. We make silly songs out of just about anything.

My daughter asks me to pick books

Photo by D. Mentzer, Rosemount EHS/HS



Parents and children can take a few minutes to look at books together in Head Start classrooms.

from my (adult) bookshelves and we spend time reading and talking about them.

I never knew how important I was as a father...I would never want to hurt my child’s success in any way. I am now getting the Pell Grant and I am enrolled in the community college.

I have been more attentive with my children and how I talk to them.

This testimony from Head Start dads speaks to the positive and enduring impact that family literacy can have on the parent-child relationship and on children’s learning. ■

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Willa C. Siegel is Program Specialist, Education Branch, Head Start Bureau. T: 202-205-4011; E: wsiegel@acf.hhs.gov
Barry Gary is Director, Head Start at the NCFL. T: 502-584-1133 ext. 163; E: bgary@famlit.org Jacqueline Davis is a Training Specialist for the NCFL. T: 323-469-4439; E: jdavis@famlit.org

USING CHILDREN'S BOOKS WITH DADS

Adam Rosen is Program Manager of Mother Goose Programs, which is a non-profit organization affiliated with the Library of Congress. Mother Goose Programs enhance the development, self-esteem, and success of children by building the skills and confidence of parents, librarians, and educators through the use of picture books, training, and activity guides. Adam was interviewed for the Head Start Bulletin about a family literacy program, Especially for Dads, that has been implemented in early childhood programs including Head Start.

Photo by J. Wilkins. Southwestern Community Services HS.



A literacy program needs to choose father-friendly books that draw upon dads' experiences and interests.

Q: What is Especially for Dads?

This is a book-based program designed to help fathers and other male caregivers connect with children. Recently, I led the program at Rutland County Head Start, VT, as part of their father involvement effort. The group met for three evenings; it was free and dinner was provided. I used the *Especially for Dads* father-friendly picture books and hands-on activities to help teach the men how to read with young children, even babies and toddlers. The emphasis was on exploring the book's ideas together, having conversations, and asking questions—all the necessary ingredients for promoting early language and literacy development. The dads were given 11 picture books to keep (see sidebar) and an activity guide.

During these sessions, the men also discussed their own childhood experiences of being read to, or not. Research shows that adults who were not read to as children are less likely to read to their own children. And there is very compelling research indicating that children who are read to are more likely to become readers.

Q: How did the Head Start dads react to the program?

They were so enthusiastic. They experienced the pleasure of reading with their children and being involved. As one father said, "*Especially for Dads* has not just given me lots of different ways to read the books but also has given me lots of activities related to books that my kids and I can do together." But the message the fathers came away with was even broader—they learned about the unique role they can play in their child's development. Another father said, "The book program really teaches a dad through reading that he is very important in his child's life." Of course, believing that you as a dad contribute to your child's development is a goal of male involvement efforts in Head Start programs!

One dad came to each session with his 8-year-old. In this family, the father

and his oldest son share the important job of reading to the younger siblings. It was great to have both of them there, because they both wanted the practice reading the books and to talk about activities that can accompany book reading.

After the literacy program, some of the dads decided to volunteer in Head Start classrooms. They found that they really loved reading to children.

Q: How do Head Start staff react to this program?

I think the literacy program for dads, coupled with staff training, can be important ways to support the fatherhood initiative in Head Start programs.

I did a one-day workshop with the Rutland County Head Start classroom staff, which got them all very excited about engaging dads as literacy partners. One staff person planned to take the books out on home visits and show the dads how to read them and do the follow-up activities. Another staff member said, "The presentation made me think about dads and how important 'Dad and Me' time is for kids."

Q: What kinds of books are used in the program?

The 11 books I used with the Head Start dads are interesting and stimulating to read. They engage the reader, just as good adult literature does. In addition, the books have these features:

- Positive male role models
- Ethnic and racial diversity

USING CHILDREN'S BOOKS WITH DADS

FATHER-FRIENDLY BOOKS

TITLE	AUTHOR
Wee Willie Winkie and Other Rhymes	Iona Opie
I Went Walking	Julie Vivas
The Adventures of Sparrowboy	Brian Pinkney
Down the Road	Alice Schertle
Sam Who Never Forgets	Eve Rice
Pablo's Tree	Pat Mora
10 Minutes till Bedtime	Peggy Rathmann
Biggest, Strongest, Fastest	Steve Jenkins
Albert's Alphabet	Leslie Tryon
How Many Stars in the Sky?	Lenny Hort
Flower Garden	Eve Bunting
Taxi, Taxi	Cari Best

- Rich illustrations
- Familiar themes about independence, relationships, and the wide world

For example, *Sam Who Never Forgets* stimulates discussion about being a provider and remembering to do the important things in a child's life. We provide fiction and non-fiction books because research shows that males of all ages tend to be more interested in non-fiction. So the books include stories about animals and the night sky—topics that fathers might be interested in and discuss with their youngsters.

One book, *Pablo's Tree*, had a special appeal for some of the Head Start dads who were either adopted themselves or had adopted children. The story

is about an adopted child who plants a tree with her grandfather. Plus, the Rutland area is fairly rural, so planting is a familiar activity.

Q: Do moms and dads have different approaches to using books with their children?

The themes that fathers identify with in books are somewhat different because their styles, attitudes, and experiences are different. Dads tend to be more willing to let their children take risks and exhibit independence. They seem to encourage children to solve problems on their own, whereas mothers will step in and mediate or redirect. So the books that dads prefer may be different from the ones moms prefer. Dads also like to explain how things

work and may use scientific terms and words the child has not heard before. So it's especially important in a literacy program to choose father-friendly books that will draw upon dads' experiences and strengths. Men will gain confidence as parents and as readers if the materials are a good match. As they read stories about children's adventures and problem-solving feats, dads often reminisce about their own childhood. Their children love to hear about "When I was a boy..."

Q: Any advice for Head Start programs that want to encourage dads to read to their children?

The best way to support literacy in a family is to give family members books that they can use at home. Let them know they can read the books over and over again.

When Head Start programs put books in a father's hands, they're sending the message: "Reading to your child is important and you can do it!" ■

Background information was taken from the newspaper article, "A new story: Dads reading to children," by Seth Harkness, *Rutland Herald*, October 8, 2003.

Adam Rosen is Program Manager, Mother Goose Programs, Vermont Center for the Book, Chester, VT.
T: 802-875-2751 x 109;
E: adam@mothergooseprograms.org

BY JOEL PELAYO, SR.

MY STORY

WE MOVED FROM MEXICO TO THE USA IN 1990, when my wife was 6 months pregnant. I was working in a fruit-packing house at that time. It was that night, October 31, when I received a phone call that my wife was at the hospital. Then I experienced different feelings and thoughts, asking myself if something was wrong. We learned early that the baby was coming in a different position, so I went to the hospital right away and I found my wife doing some exercises to correct the baby's position.

My wife was attached to a fetal monitor to observe if everything was O.K. When we were alone, suddenly I realized that the baby's heart rate was coming flat. Quickly I called for the doctor and she gave instructions to the medical team to have everything ready for a cesarean. The baby had the umbilical cord around his neck.

Being with my wife at the delivering moment was something very special, a unique experience. Joel Jr. was born on a Halloween night!

The News

When my wife was transferred to the recovery room, one of the doctors told me I needed to talk to him. I imagined that something was not O.K. I was worried, but I didn't see the doctor again that night.

The next morning, my wife was breastfeeding the baby when one of the doctors came to our room and told us that my baby was born with Mongolism (Down syndrome). Due to the language barrier, it was difficult for me to understand. My wife was all tears because of the way we learned the news. The words the doctor used were offensive words in our country. Again I was experiencing different feelings. I was confused, frus-



Photo courtesy of J. Pelayo.

The challenges we had were opportunities to learn and share with other families.

trated and, in some ways, alone. I learned that my family needed lots of support. To be in a different country, it was difficult to adapt and also expecting that our life would need to change with the needs of this special baby.

Getting Services

I must say that we received basic support. For my family to hear that we had options and local social services and schools with special providers available, it was a relief!

My experience when Joel was taken for his medical evaluation was sad for me. At that time, the social workers had little expectations about what we already knew about this condition. They did not ask me what I already knew about Down syndrome. They assumed that I knew little or nothing. I felt they were talking "down" to me. I felt little respect for what I knew.

Changes

We learned that having a child with spe-

cial needs required different life routines. The challenges we had we saw as opportunities to learn and share with other families who experienced similar situations. We are learning every day to take advantage of community services available.

Currently, Joel Jr. is at middle school. Last month he was recognized as the student of the month. He has been participating in 4-H Horse Club. He also attends soccer games designed for children with special needs. As a family, we are involved with the Community Connections Team. They are represented by different local agencies such as: doctors, therapists, social workers, teachers, school psychologist, instructional assistants and other persons involved in the life of our son.

Joel Pelayo, Sr. has been working for Head Start/Early Head Start in the Mid-Columbia Region of Oregon for 7 years. His story can be heard in Spanish at <http://www.specialquest.org/pelayo.html>. He shares his story so that others can support, understand, and feel empathy with families who have experiences similar to those of his family. Joel participated as a SpecialQuest team member in the Hilton/Early Head Start Training Program whose mission is to support EHS and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start staff and family members to develop skills and strategies for accessing and using services, resources, and technology to include infants and toddlers with significant disabilities and their families in EHS/MSHS programs.

BY MONA IVEY-SOTO AND BRIAN ORTIZ

BECOME A CHILD'S HERO TODAY— STOP EXPOSURE TO SECONDHAND TOBACCO SMOKE!

THE HEAD START BUREAU (HSB) and the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Indoor Environments Division have formed an important new partnership entitled *Smoke-free Homes for Head Start Families*. The goal of the partnership is to reduce children's exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke. HSB and EPA will introduce educational materials and training to motivate parents and caregivers to make their homes and cars smoke-free.

Numerous studies have shown that breathing secondhand smoke is especially harmful to infants, toddlers, and young children because their lungs are still developing. Health consequences from exposure to secondhand smoke include bronchitis, pneumonia, ear infections, and increases in the number and severity of asthma attacks. Secondhand smoke also is a risk factor for new cases of asthma in children who have not previously exhibited asthma symptoms.

A review of data in the 2002 Head Start Program Information Report shows that nationwide approximately 5%, or more than 52,000 children in Head Start, received or are receiving medical treatment for asthma alone. Many asthma attacks and other illnesses can be avoided by making the children's homes and cars smoke-free.

Recognizing the positive impact that fathers have on their children's healthy development, the *Smoke-free Homes for Head Start Families* partnership will be launched officially at the National Head Start Training Institute on Father Involvement, June 14-18, 2004 in Dallas, Texas. HSB and EPA are committed to involving fathers in reducing their children's health risks by motivating them to take the "Smoke-free Home Pledge." The

The materials, which include posters and brochures, will support the efforts of staff and parents to promote safe and healthy indoor environments for their families. These materials and other



Photo by R. Brocato.

A Smoke Free Focus Group discussed ways to get the message out.

pledge is a promise parents make to keep their homes and vehicles smoke-free.

Workshops will be conducted at the Institute on Father Involvement to train and encourage fathers to take the smoke-free message back to their local communities and to help promote awareness of the harmful effects of secondhand smoke. Presenters will explain effective techniques to prevent exposure to secondhand smoke and will share materials to encourage parents and caregivers to create a healthier environment for children at home.

Through this nationwide partnership, the EPA and HSB will provide local Head Start programs with multi-cultural materials in both English and Spanish about the effects of secondhand smoke.

publications are available free of charge by calling EPA's Indoor Air Quality Hotline (IAQ Info) at 1-800-438-4318 or by visiting www.epa.gov/smokefree

Get a "head start" on this new initiative by becoming a leader and role model for your Head Start program. Call 1-866-SMOKE-FREE (1-866-766-5337) and take the pledge to make your home and vehicle smoke-free. You can become your child's hero today! ■

Mona Ivey-Soto is a Head Start Fellow in Washington, D.C. T: 202-205-8034; E: mivey-soto1@acf.hhs.gov; Brian Ortiz is a Program Analyst, Environmental Protection Agency, Indoor Environments Division. T: 202-343-9819; E: ortiz.brian@epa.gov.

NATIONAL MEN'S HEALTH WEEK CELEBRATES 10TH ANNIVERSARY

Health Screening on Capitol Hill Sets Example for Rest of Country

WASHINGTON, D.C., JUNE 10, 2003—Kicking off a week of nationwide events designed to show how simple, pain-free diagnostic tests can save lives, Congressional leaders and their staff will participate in health screenings on Capitol Hill this week. The screenings are part of “**National Men’s Health Week.**” Event supporters hope to raise awareness of the rising and predominantly silent crisis in the health and well-being of men.

National Men’s Health Week, celebrated each year as the week leading up to and including Father’s Day, brings together corporations, government agencies, religious and fraternal organizations and others committed to the prevention and treatment of men’s health issues. National Men’s Health Week organizers plan a variety of activities in communities across the country.

“We’re pleased that Congress continues to take such an active role in National Men’s Health Week. Their support and that of the many participants nationwide have enabled us to raise awareness of men’s health issues in more and more communities across the country,” said Megan Smith, Director of Project Development, Men’s Health Network.

The Men’s Health Network (MHN) is a non-profit educational organization located in Washington, D.C. Now in its eleventh year, MHN was the driving force behind the installment of the “National Men’s Health Week” Act in 1994.

“Lack of awareness, poor health education and culturally induced behavior patterns in the work and personal lives of men continue to contribute to the growing crisis in men’s health,” said Jean Bonhomme, MD, MPH and Board of Director’s member of the Men’s Health Network.

Congress has remained committed to National Men’s Health Week since its inception. For the past six years, men’s health screenings have been offered on Capitol Hill during National Men’s Health Week, with more than 700 members, staffers, and employees participating each year. MHN will sponsor screenings for prostate cancer, blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes and body fat with support from Pfizer Inc.

Among several Congressional leaders, U.S. Representatives

Randy “Duke” Cunningham and John Conyers and Senators Bill Frist and Richard Shelby have been instrumental in joining the Men’s Health Network in supporting this effort. Over 300 members of Congress cosponsored the “National Men’s Health Week” Act in 1994.

“As a prostate cancer survivor, I know first hand the importance of annual examinations and early detection. Do not become a statistic. Please stop by your local clinic or doctor’s office this week for a screening for prostate cancer, blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, colon cancer, and body fat,” said U.S. Representative Randy “Duke” Cunningham. “Take the time to protect your health and have a health professional explain your risks and the results of your tests.”

Photo by D. Mentzer, Rosemount Center HS/EHS.



Some Head Start fatherhood programs offer health screenings to dads.

More than 45 governors have declared Men’s Health Week in their states and a number of corporations have also signaled their commitment to promoting men’s health issues during National Men’s Health Week. ■

The Men’s Health Network is a non-profit educational organization of physicians, researchers, public health workers, individuals and other health professionals committed to improving the health and wellness of men through education campaigns, data collection and work with health care providers. Additional questions or comments should be referred to info@menshealthnetwork.org or by calling (202) 543-6461 extension 101. or by visiting <http://www.menshealthweek.org/>

RESOURCES

PRINT

NFI RELEASES DEPLOYED FATHERS AND FAMILIES™ GUIDE AND BROCHURE

Keeping military fathers connected with their families during deployment is one of National Fatherhood Initiative's top priorities. That is why NFI, with generous support from the Boeing Company and assistance from Parents Educating Parents, Inc., created the *Deployed Fathers and Families™ Guide for Enlisted Personnel* and the accompanying brochure, *10 Ways to Stay Involved with Your Children During Deployment*.

"These materials equip military dads and their families with important information, advice, and strategies to help them effectively manage the challenges of military deployment," explains Christopher Brown, NFI's Vice President of National Programming. The 48-page Guide offers practical pre-deployment tips and exercises to help military dads and their families handle the financial, medical, legal, and personal aspects of military deployment. The Guide provides military dads with many of the most critical tools they need to stay connected at home while taking care of business overseas. The brochure condenses some of the information in the Guide into 10 tips that a deployed dad can use to stay connected with mom and his kids.

NFI has distributed 35,000 of the guides and brochures to individuals and organizations that work with military

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WEBLIOGRAPHY

The following Web sites about fatherhood are recommended as further resources for teachers, parents, and administrators

1 <http://www.newdads.com>

BOOT CAMP FOR NEW DADS (BCND), formed in 1990 to help new fathers "hit the ground crawling," is rapidly developing into a national support network for men confronting the realities of fatherhood. This Web site covers issues from *Immediate Concerns* such as *Forming a New Family* and *The Challenges New Moms Present* to *Hands on Tips* on how to care for yourself, mom and the baby.

2 <http://fathering.org>

CENTER FOR SUCCESSFUL FATHERING was founded in 1995 by Dr. Ron Klinger as a response to the growing number of children who were growing up without a father in their lives.

3 <http://www.cffpp.org>

THE CENTER ON FATHERS, FAMILIES, AND PUBLIC POLICY (CFFPP) is a nationally-focused public policy organization conducting policy research, technical assistance, training, litigation and public education in order to focus attention on the barriers faced by never-married, low-income fathers and their families.

4 <http://www.fcnetwork.org>

FAMILY AND CORRECTIONS NETWORK (FCN) is an organization for and about families of prisoners. It offers information, training and technical assistance on children of prisoners, parenting programs for prisoners, prison visiting, incarcerated fathers and mothers, hospitality programs, keeping in touch, returning to the community, the impact of the justice system on families, and prison marriage.

5 <http://www.familysupportamerica.org>

FAMILY SUPPORT AMERICA promotes family support as the nationally recognized movement to strengthen and support families and places the principles of family support practice at the heart of every setting in which children and families are present.

6 <http://www.fatherhoodproject.org>

THE FATHERHOOD PROJECT® is a national research and education project that is examining the future of fatherhood and developing ways to support men's involvement in child rearing. Its books, films, consultation, seminars, and training all present practical strategies to support fathers and mothers in their parenting roles.

WEBLIOGRAPHY

Continued from previous page

7 <http://www.fathersnetwork.org>

THE FATHERS NETWORK advocates for and provides resources and support to all men who have children with special needs by developing a database of fathers, support and mentoring programs, newsletters, and curriculum materials; providing technical assistance to organizations and agencies so their services are increasingly “father friendly”; and sponsoring local, regional, and national conferences. Printed and web materials are available in English and Spanish and other languages whenever possible.

8 <http://www.fathers.com>

The goal of the NATIONAL CENTER FOR FATHERING is to help men be better fathers. Most fathers who use this site are looking for practical tips and suggestions on how to improve their fathering of teens, school-aged children, adult children and grandchildren.

9 <http://www.npcl.org>

The mission of the NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP FOR COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP (NPCL), formerly National Center for Strategic Nonprofit Planning and Community Leadership, Inc., is to improve the governance and administration of nonprofit, tax-exempt organizations and strengthen community leadership through family and neighborhood empowerment. This Web site provides details about NPCL's programs and services, and the public and customized workshops offered by NPCL to help community-based organizations and public agencies better serve young, low-income single fathers and fragile families.

10 <http://www.ncoff.gse.upenn.edu>

THE NATIONAL CENTER ON FATHERS AND FAMILIES (NCOFF) is an interdisciplinary policy research center. NCOFF is dedicated to research and practice that expands the knowledge base on father involvement and family development, and that informs policy designed to improve the well-being of children.

11 <http://vfnet.com>

THE VITAL INTERAGENCY TECHNOLOGICAL ACCESS LINKS FOR FAMILIES NETWORK (VFNet) is a consortium of more than 50 organizations located in the southeastern region of Los Angeles County. Its purpose is to support communities through the coordination of programs and resources which will facilitate access to services designed to enhance the quality of life for children, youth, and families. The National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute is a member.

12 <http://www.npnff.org>

The mission of the NATIONAL PRACTITIONERS NETWORK FOR FATHERS AND FAMILIES, INC. (NPNFF) is to build the profession of practitioners working to increase the responsible involvement of fathers in the lives of their children. It offers publications, conferences, training events, technical assistance, advocacy, collaboration with other fathers and families organizations, and networking opportunities.

13 <http://www.fatherhood.org/>

THE NATIONAL FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE (NFI) was founded in 1994 to lead a society-wide movement to confront the problem of father absence. NFI's mission is to improve the well-being of children by increasing the proportion of children growing up with involved, responsible, and committed fathers. It provides public awareness campaigns, research, and print resources and offers curricula, training, and technical assistance.

14 <http://www.fatherhood.hhs.gov/index.shtml>

THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES has developed a special initiative to support and strengthen the roles of fathers in families. This initiative is guided by several principles, including the conviction that all fathers can be important contributors to the well-being of their children. A Toolkit for Fatherhood is available on the site.

Compiled by the *Bulletin* staff.

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concerning which types of intervention programs work best for whom and under what circumstances.

Nevertheless, what we do know is that fathers matter to their infants and that they matter a whole lot more than has been assumed by some for much of this century. Unfortunately, this knowledge comes at a time when increasing numbers of infants can no longer count on their fathers being there throughout their childhood. The challenge is to continue to accumulate knowledge about the unique ways that fathers contribute to infant development, while at the same time persuading more fathers to actually make those contributions.

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Research Facts, Continued from 15

of literacy activities as mothers, and play a powerful role in supporting literacy development in young children, according to multicultural studies. Fathers, like mothers, read story books, environmental material, newspapers, and stories on the internet. Furthermore, both parents engage in the same writing activities including spelling; identifying, coloring, and tracing letters; and typing words on the computer. All fathers model the power and value of reading and literacy when they engage in joint literacy activities with their children.

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Compiled by *Bulletin* Staff.

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families. These materials will be available for purchase from the National Fatherhood Clearinghouse and Resource Center (NFCRC) in May. Email: info@fatherhood.org, Web Site: <http://www.fatherhood.org>. ■

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ways to move to higher levels of father involvement .

This article references *Father Studies in Early Head Start*. These studies are supported by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development; the Administration on Children, Youth and Families; the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; and the Ford Foundation. The Father Studies include information from a variety of sources including quantitative and qualitative studies of approximately 800 low-income fathers participating in the Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Project, an embedded study of nearly 200 fathers of newborns, qualitative and quantitative studies of practitioners, and local research studies.

The Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Project is a longitudinal study of 17 Early Head Start programs' implementation and impacts. The study is funded by the Administration for Children and Families under contract to Mathematica Policy Research and Columbia University Center for Children and Families in collaboration with the Early Head Start Research Consortium. Reports from this project are available at http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/core/ongoing_research/ehs/ehs_intro.html. ■

Helen Raikes is Society for Research in Child Development Consultant, Administration on Children, Youth and Families. T: 402-433-7278; E: hraikes@neb.rr.com

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dated and strengthen their nurturing side.” The men share experiences and talk about being fathers. They plan activities like cook outs and sports which become opportunities for them to bond with one another.

Lessons Learned

According to Michael, who has been involved in the ABCD fatherhood activities from the start, engaging men is an evolving process. A critical part is educating staff on how to get men involved. Staff needs to understand that there are gender differences, that is, the needs of men are different from the needs of women. But both moms and dads need respect and validation from staff. One of the additional challenges for the Head Start program has been addressing conceptions of masculinity and femininity that differ from culture to culture.

The agency-wide focus on male involvement has supported the hiring of male staff. Michael is one of two program directors in ABCD Head Start; at his own center, he has hired a male teacher, case manager and three males who serve on the Policy council. He notes how important it is to help children see men in caregiving positions and to provide positive role models. Not surprisingly, hiring male staff has led to increased male involvement. Michael makes it a point to shake hands with men who come in the building to set an example for the rest of his staff and to welcome the men.

Good Guys has nurtured positive staff-father relations. Michael observes, for example, that men are feeling more comfortable talking with the classroom staff when they drop off their children. They experience Head Start as a place for them, not just for moms. Of course, when dads spend time talking with the staff, they have an opportunity to learn about their children’s progress as well as the program’s activities for fathers and families.

The challenge for Good Guys, like any parent program, is to be responsive to the changing needs of the parents. Michael notes that there are more and more single dads and ABCD Good Guys has to find better avenues to promote their involvement in their children’s lives and in the program activities.

Thinking ahead to future directions, Michael offers this insight: “Men’s strength is not in their muscles but in their passion for doing things with their children.” Promoting father involvement is not always easy, but the benefits are obvious for the Head Start children and their families. ■

Written by *Bulletin* staff based on an interview with Michael Rivera and review of program materials.

Michael Rivera is the Program Director of Parker Hill-Fenway Head Start and Co-Chair of the ABCD Good Guys, Boston, MA. T: 617-427-0464; E: rivera@bostonabcd.org n

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the predicament of non-residential fathers and speaks about his own experiences with a protracted custody battle and paying child support. Marvin and Ron’s experiences allow them to empathize with fathers facing similar crises and to serve as effective role models.

Looking Ahead

Eric Brown thinks that dads bring a unique perspective to their children by encouraging curiosity and stimulating their interest in the wider world. He hopes the male involvement program will continue to grow. “For every child, there is a father. I want every father to be involved in his child’s life.” Marvin Hogan and Ron Collins would certainly agree. They, and many others around the country, share Eric’s wish for the future of male involvement in Head Start programs. ■

Written by *Bulletin* staff based on interviews with Marvin Hogan, Ron Collins, Eric Brown and review of program materials.

Marvin Hogan is Executive Director of Friends of Children of Mississippi, Inc.

T: 601-353-3264 ext. 3002;

E-mail: fcmeagleeye@bellsouth.net;

Ron Collins is Male Involvement Coordinator. T: 601-353-3264 ext. 3042;

E: ronald-collins@bellsouth.net;

Eric Brown is Vice Chairman of the Head Start County Council. T: 601-823-5700.

<http://www.fatherhood.hhs.gov/index.shtml>

THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES has developed a special initiative to support and strengthen the roles of fathers in families. This initiative is guided by the following principles:

- * All fathers can be important contributors to the well-being of their children.
- * Parents are partners in raising their children, even when they do not live in the same household.
- * The roles fathers play in families are diverse and related to cultural and community norms.
- * Men should receive the education and support necessary to prepare them for the responsibility of parenthood.
- * Government can encourage and promote father involvement through its programs and through its own workforce policies.

A Toolkit for Fatherhood is available on the site.

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